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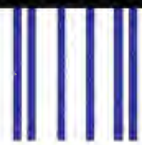
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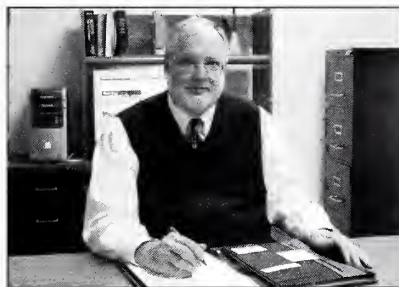
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Dana Heupel



## Technology is tempting, but it can lead to insulation

by Dana Heupel

**A**t a recent family holiday gathering, much of the talk among my siblings and me — and our spouses and now-grown children — involved technology. We marveled at the wonders of our iPads and smart phones and traded tips about features that keep us informed, entertained and organized. When we weren't using the high-tech contraptions, we were charging their batteries, all the while monitoring college football bowl games on a high-definition television.

I had navigated the way to my brother's house in a wooded, rural setting with my GPS, making the four-hour trip more bearable by listening to my iPod, which I can play through my car's audio system and which contains about 2,500 of my favorite songs in a device the size of a candy bar. The GPS also took us straight to the entrance of our hotel about five miles away from our family gathering. My laptop computer stayed at home this time — though it accompanies us on most forays away from Springfield — because I figured we wouldn't have time to use it. We did spend several

---

*Over the years, I've tried to keep up with technological advances. And I'll be the first to testify to the abundant ways that technology has enhanced my life.*

hours on my brother's laptop, though, showing one another our favorite YouTube videos.

When I returned home, I hooked up my newest toy: a small box called an Apple TV, a gift from my son that allows me to play music and videos from my desktop computer on my own new high-def television. I then fiddled with the HDTV — the main Christmas gift this year between my wife and me — for several hours to get the best picture and to configure it so that the sound also comes through my ancient

audio system. After I finished that chore, I hooked up a couple of digital television converters that Comcast had supplied for old TVs in our bedrooms because the cable television company no longer broadcasts in the old analog format.

Over the years, I've tried to keep up with technological advances. And I'll be the first to testify to the abundant ways that technology has enhanced my life: I can scan scores of news publications and keep up with events almost as they occur; I can communicate instantly with friends and colleagues; I can research in minutes what would have taken hours little more than a decade ago — if my local library had the material I needed. Perhaps the most beneficial aspect is that I can now get home from work at a reasonable hour, knowing that if something comes up at the office, I don't have to drive back to deal with it. And I can live in a smaller city and still have access to nearly all of the cultural, entertainment and retail opportunities that were once restricted to those in large urban areas.

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***By choice and necessity, I have allowed myself to become thoroughly immersed in technology, and generally, I embrace it. But I also worry sometimes about what we've lost in all we've gained.***

Of course, technology also plays a large part in what we do at *Illinois Issues*. We are now able to provide our readers with breaking news coverage through our blog and website. Our online presence reaches far beyond what we can offer on newsstands alone — a check of recent statistics shows Web visits from Canada, Norway, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the Ukraine, South Korea, Brazil and the Netherlands, as well as from throughout the United States. And discussions continue about how we can offer more information online and through other technological platforms.

By choice and necessity, I have allowed myself to become thoroughly immersed in technology, and generally, I embrace it. But I also worry sometimes about what we've lost in all we've gained.

Consorting with technology expends a lot of time and money. I don't read as many books as I used to, and I feel guilty about that. I am amazed — and incensed — that a \$1,000 computer that was state-of-the-art only several years ago is now archaic and almost unusable. I spend an inordinate amount of energy at home and work updating and upgrading equipment and software and backing up essential information, such as my electronic calendar and address book, that might otherwise be lost if my computer coughs. And I've moved further than I'm comfortable with toward paranoia over electronic security, feeling at times like a resident of a dangerous neighborhood whose safety, privacy and possessions

are protected only by cheap padlocks.

I am also concerned about the growing gulf between those among us who are swaddled in all this technology and those who either can't afford it or find it too complex or too cumbersome to bother with. As more information is conveyed in bits and bytes that require expensive and complicated equipment to decipher, and as more places such as public libraries downsize or shutter their doors, we face a real danger of leaving a lot of people out of the discussion.

What's more, when our focus turns more toward electronic esthetics and away from human contact and conversation, we run the risk of severing some of our personal connections, of replacing shared flesh-and-blood pulses with electronic ones. I often see that trait in students on the university campus where I work who wrap themselves in technological cocoons, apparently oblivious to everything and everyone around them.

Although many of us are irrevocably and willingly bound to technology, we might heed those who aren't because they may still be in touch with something that we've forsaken.

While I thoroughly enjoyed all of the talk about the latest high-tech gadgets with my family at our holiday gathering, I find myself looking back on that day with a twinge of remorse. Past get-togethers had often included fierce late-night games of dominoes or Trivial Pursuit or a concert by the impromptu family band — consisting of several guitars, a piano, a harmonica and a lone clarinet — during which we unceremoniously butchered some beautiful Christmas carols. But this year, we abandoned those traditions in our collective headlong rush into the alluring world of technology. And looking back now, I wish we hadn't.

Technology is a remarkable tool, but it can become addictive and all-encompassing. And if we let ourselves become too consumed by its siren song, we can lose track of whether we control it or the other way around. □

*Dana Heupel can be reached at [heupel.dana@uis.edu](mailto:heupel.dana@uis.edu).*



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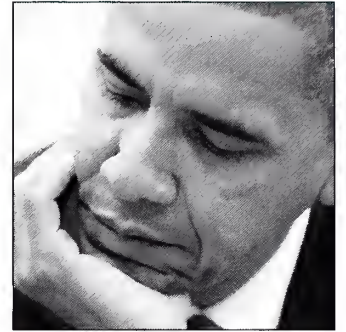
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Jamey Dunn



## Emotions roil as the legislature debates the death penalty

by Jamey Dunn

**T**he topic of the death penalty is always weighty. Fear, morality, religious beliefs, often-shocking violence, the mourning of victims' families and our ideas of what justice should be all come into play.

Those emotions surfaced again as Illinois lawmakers debated and ultimately passed legislation to abolish executions in the waning hours of the two-year legislative session that ended in January. And the state's dubious history of wrongful convictions made the subject even thornier.

In 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court found that the process of sentencing people to death, which gave a jury full discretion on sentencing, could result in inconsistent and arbitrary death sentences and constituted "cruel and unusual punishment." The ruling (*Furman v. Georgia*) nullified death penalty statutes across the country. That resulted in the commutation of more than 600 sentences and effectively led to a brief break from the death penalty while states across the country, including Illinois, redrafted their capital punishment laws.

Illinois reinstated the death penalty in 1973, but the Illinois Supreme Court ruled the new version of the statute unconstitutional, in part because it violated the requirement for a direct appeal of capital cases to the Supreme Court. Illinois legislators passed a new

version in 1977, after other states' newly written statutes survived challenges and were upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Gregg v. Georgia* ruling. Former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, a Chicago native who was seated about six months before the ruling, was a co-author of the decision. Stevens' views on capital punishment grew more moderate over his time on the court, and he took several votes to limit its scope. He recently wrote an essay that was highly critical of the death penalty for the *New York Review of Books*.

*Illinois Issues* reported a few weeks before the General Assembly voted to reinstate capital punishment in 1977:

"Few issues stir public passions and individual soul-searching as much as capital punishment. Legislative debate and public hearings sometimes become forums for scriptural exhortations, libertarian denunciations, legal analyses and a variety of emotional outbursts. There is no doubt, however, that the public, like its lawmakers, is firmly in favor of the death penalty as the best way to deal with murderers. Yet, vocal opponents claim murder by states is no less perverse or senseless than murder by individuals.

With last summer's U.S. Supreme Court ruling (*Gregg v. Georgia*) upholding capital punishment within certain strict guidelines, Illinois, like the rest of the states, is rushing to revive the death

penalty. .... Yet, there are profound and persistent questions in the capital punishment debate that have gone unanswered for centuries as civilized societies have sought ways to protect themselves and punish criminals. Against this backdrop, it is only a matter of time before an Illinois governor signs the death penalty into law," *Illinois Issues* reported in 1977.

Since the 1970s, many of the states that reinstated the death penalty have sought to perfect the legal process, which is always open to human error, as well as to determine the most humane way to carry out the ultimate punishment. A few of those states have since chosen to forgo capital punishment, and execution numbers are down in recent years.

According to a report by the Death Penalty Information Center, based in Washington, D.C., executions in America dropped 12 percent in 2010 from 2009. The number of executions has dropped by more than half since 1999. Twenty-six of the 53 jurisdictions in the United States — which includes the 50 states, the District of Columbia, the federal court system and the military — either do not have the death penalty or have not executed anyone in the last 10 years, and many have not executed anyone since capital punishment was reinstated nationally in 1976. A dozen states executed prisoners in the last year.



Illinois, which has executed 12 prisoners since reinstating the death penalty, last carried out an execution 1999.

2010 marked the 10th anniversary of Illinois' moratorium on the death penalty. Former Gov. George Ryan, then a supporter of capital punishment, called for Illinois to take a break from using it after 13 prisoners on death row were exonerated. He created a Commission on Capital Punishment and tasked its members to propose reforms to Illinois' flawed death penalty system. Ryan also commuted the sentences of 167 death-row inmates to life in prison shortly before leaving office in 2003.

From the executive order creating the commission: "The people of the State of Illinois must have full and complete confidence that when the death penalty is imposed and final appeals of that sentence are completed, the guilt of the defendant has been justly, fairly, thoroughly and accurately established."

Ryan's commission found serious problems in the system. Some of the individuals who had been exonerated were convicted without any physical evidence to tie them to the crimes. Some were sent to death row based solely on testimony from individuals who would potentially benefit from their statements, such as prison informants or accomplices. "In some cases, the evidence was so minimal that there was some question not only as to why prosecutors sought the death penalty, but why the prosecution was even pursued against the particular defendant."

A study that was conducted in tandem with the commission's assessment of Illinois' death penalty process found that the odds of a defendant receiving a death sentence had a correlation to both the geographic location of the crime and the race of the victim. Killers in rural areas were more likely to be sentenced to death. "All other things being equal, the study showed the odds of a convicted killer in Cook County receiving a death sentence are 84 percent lower than for a similar defendant in the state's rural counties," Daniel Vock, now a reporter for Stateline.org in Washington, D.C., wrote in an *Illinois Issues* article on the study. Someone who killed a black person was 60 percent less likely to receive a death sentence. "While [the study] did

find that white offenders were twice as likely to receive death sentences as blacks on a percentage basis, that distinction vanished once researchers factored in the victim's race." Studies on other states and the federal system found similar results.

Ryan's commission made 85 recommendations intended to improve the system. The General Assembly enacted reforms in 2003, including:

- Reliability screenings for testimony from criminal informants.
- Access to DNA databases both before trial and after conviction.
- A specific set of instructions that must be given to witnesses before they pick suspects out of police lineups.
- Prohibiting prosecutors from seeking the death penalty in cases that are based on a single witness's testimony with no corroborating evidence.

The reforms broadened the Illinois Supreme Court's ability to overturn capital cases. They also require trial judges who disagree with a jury's decision to impose a death sentence to submit their opposition in writing for the record. Another bill, which passed separately from the larger reform package and requires police officers to make a video recording of murder confessions, was sponsored by then-Chicago Democratic Sen. Barack Obama.

Former Chicago Democratic Rep. Art Turner, the sponsor of a 2003 bill to repeal the death penalty, did not believe the changes went far enough. "If I'm not around [in the legislature] five years from now," Turner told *Illinois Issues* in 2003, "you can say that Art Turner said that those reforms are not going to change a damn thing."

Others, however, heralded the changes as real reform, and current supporters of capital punishment, including many states' attorneys, say they have worked.

Although Illinois has not executed anyone in more than 10 years, prosecutors have continued to seek the death penalty, with 15 prisoners sitting on death row when the General Assembly voted to abolish executions. The Capital Litigation Fund has spent more than \$100 million since it was created in the 2003 reform push to aid defendants in building their cases when prosecutors

seek the death penalty. About \$17 million was spent from that fund on capital cases last year. Under the legislation to end the death penalty, the money from that fund would go toward services for victim's families and training for law enforcement.

The debate in both chambers of the General Assembly was emotional and even gruesome at times, when speakers recalled some of the most violent crimes in the state's past. While the issue is not one with much potential for middle ground, there were concerned individuals making earnest pleas on both sides. Both sides have tragic stories of lives destroyed. Both sides have support from crime victims' families. The Commission on Capital Punishment's report said, "Surviving family members expressed diverse views on the system and the question of capital punishment itself."

Legislators who support the death penalty say they may introduce bills in the current session to reinstate it. It's likely that the debate about whether the state should have the option to put prisoners to death for the most heinous of crimes will likely always be with us, and capital punishment will continue to be a significant part of Illinois history.

During House debate, Rep. Susana Mendoza said she supports the death penalty and admitted to experiencing emotional turmoil over the issue. She said she thought she could personally execute a serial killer or someone who murdered a police officer and easily sleep at night. However, her decision to vote for the repeal came after she put aside her own emotions and acknowledged how flawed Illinois' system has been.

"We've come horrifyingly close to executing innocent men, and it could happen again," Mendoza said.

Moving forward, public officials should follow Mendoza's lead to put aside the emotion and shocking details, tone down the rhetoric, retrace the history and seek to do what they see as truly best for the state — be it abolition or implementing a drastic revamp of the capital punishment system and revisiting other potential reforms. ■

# BRIEFLY

## NEW PHILADELPHIA

### Study blames racism for railroad's placement

**T**he Pike County Railroad Co. (PCRC) took great strides to bypass the town of New Philadelphia in 1869.

The findings of a six-year study published in *Historical Archaeology* indicate that railroad officials most likely avoided New Philadelphia because of aversive racism, which involves denying social and economic benefits to a group because of racial prejudices.

"New Philadelphia was the first town in the United States founded, platted and advanced by an African-American," says Christopher Fennell, an anthropology professor at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, who led the study.

Frank McWorter, a former Kentucky slave who purchased his and his wife's freedom, founded New Philadelphia in 1836 as a multiracial community. The region surrounding the town was in racial strife during that period. Pro-slavery and abolitionist supporters often clashed.

New Philadelphia was near the western Illinois community of Barry on an east-west road that ran between that town and New Salem. Merchants, farmers and others traveling by wagon made the town thrive by 1865.

The PCRC proposed a new rail line to connect Naples, Ill., with Hannibal, Mo., in the early 1850s. An 1857 survey suggested that the tracks be laid through the towns of Griggsville, New Salem and Barry, which were at about the same latitude. The route would have included New Philadelphia.

The project was put on the shelf for several years because of the Civil War, Fennell says. When construction began in 1869, PCRC officials ignored the survey's recommendations, building the track north and around New Philadelphia.

New Philadelphia began to lose residents thereafter and was declassified as a town in 1885. By the 1890s, the town had reverted back to farmland.



An 1895 atlas map shows the region around Pike County, and the route of the Hannibal and Naples Railroad, later referred to as the Wabash Railroad (Rand McNally 1895). The star represents the location of New Philadelphia.

Researchers considered several explanations for the railroad company's decision. They questioned whether it was a simple business decision or one based on the topography of the region. They searched newspaper archives and the railroad company's corporate records for an explanation.

"If there was a town already to the north of New Philadelphia, and they simply paid a lot of money into that holding company (the company responsible for building the rail line), you can think of that as a business decision," Fennell says. However, no towns — only prairie land — existed on the arc north of New Philadelphia. No evidence could be found that the railroad company was trying to make a profit in the move.

The topography of the land north of New Philadelphia was problematic. At the arc's highest point, where Baylis was founded as a depot station, the elevation was significantly higher. A second locomotive was needed to push trains past "Summit Station," according to the report.

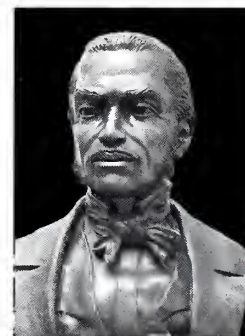
Additional rail for the bypass was costly. The Toledo Wabash Railroad Co., which was to be responsible for the upkeep of the new railroad, had required the construction company to use high-quality iron rails that had to be imported from English foundries.

"These railroad companies were very pragmatic. They didn't want to cut corners because if they put cheap rail down, it would be falling apart on them. They would have high maintenance costs," Fennell says. "All the evidence supported that they did not want to go north of the town."

Soon after construction was complete, railroad officials acknowledged in newspaper articles that the company had made a mistake and was considering moving the route south.

Railroad officials in the slave-trading town of Hannibal probably did not want to see New Philadelphia thrive as a depot station, Fennell says.

The New Philadelphia study was sponsored by a National Science Foundation program.



A sculpture of New Philadelphia founder Frank McWorter by Shirley McWorter Moss is on display at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

Photograph courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum

Kendall Cramer



# DEATH PENALTY

## Legislature approves ban

More than 10 years after former Gov. George Ryan drew national attention by ordering a moratorium on the death penalty in Illinois, legislators passed a measure that would abolish it.

Ryan stopped all executions in 2000 and called for reforms after it was discovered that the state had put 13 wrongfully convicted men on death row.

Currently, 15 prisoners are on death row. Gov. Pat Quinn said at press time that he was taking the abolition measure “under consideration.”

The state spends at least \$20 million a year on capital cases, even though Illinois has not had an execution in a decade, says Maywood Democratic Rep. Karen Yarbrough, sponsor of **Senate Bill 3539**. The bill also would require the money from the capital litigation fund, which is used to aid defendants in building their cases, to go to services for homicide victims’ families and additional police training.

Opponents say changes enacted after Ryan imposed the moratorium in 2000 have begun to improve the system. “In my office, the reforms are working,” Cook County State’s Attorney Anita Alvarez says.

Opponents also argue that police need the threat of the death penalty to push suspects for information. Rep. Jim Sacia, a Pectonica Republican and former FBI agent, recounted on the Senate floor gruesome details of crimes committed in Illinois and ways in which law enforcement officials have used what he described as the “tool” of capital punishment. “There are untold numbers, in Chicago and throughout Illinois, of successfully resolved

crimes because law enforcement had the tool to say, ‘This is an opportunity for you to face the death penalty, or if you talk to us, maybe we can give you a lengthy prison sentence.’”

Chicago Democratic Sen. Kwame Raoul, the bill’s sponsor, says prior attempts at reform have failed because in an “imperfect system,” there is no way to ensure that the state will not make a mistake again.

“People who are in opposition to the death penalty want [Illinois] to catch up to the civilized world,” he says.

Without a ban, there are no guarantees that Quinn, who supported the moratorium in his campaign, or a future governor won’t lift the moratorium and resume executions, Raoul says. “The moratorium is just an artificial hold that can be removed with the decision of one individual. ... To the extent it could lead to somebody who’s innocent being put to death under state sanction, I don’t think we can continue to support something like that.”

Some legislators called for putting the issue on the ballot as a constitutional amendment.

“Seven out of 10 of those people on death row when Gov. Ryan commuted their sentences didn’t contest their own guilt,” says Sen. William Haine, a Democrat and former prosecutor from Alton. “People have not had a say as to whether these great crimes will no longer face just punishment.”

Raoul says, “If you don’t want to take responsibility in making these hard decisions, then resign.”

*Lauren N. Johnson*

## Lawmakers pass sweeping Medicaid reform

A substantial Medicaid reform package was headed to Gov. Pat Quinn’s desk at press time. He is expected to sign it.

According to Chicago Democratic Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, a sponsor of **House Bill 5420**, it could save the state about \$775 million over five years.

Co-sponsor Rep. Patti Bellock, a Hinsdale Republican, says interest groups aligned to support the measure: “Even though they thought there was a little bit of a poison pill with every interested group ... they were ready to live with it because they realized that the system needed a lot of reorganization to protect the integrity of the Medicaid system in Illinois.”

Opponents are disappointed that health care for children was diminished. John Bouman, president of the Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law, says, “We don’t think it’s the best practice.” The provision could cost the state more money than it could save, he says. “The research-based policy of the feder-

al government is to promote enrollment of children in health care, to connect them quickly to primary care,” and to ensure that their care is not interrupted.

Reforms will:

- Extend the AllKids program, which is scheduled to expire this year, to 2016 and cap the eligibility level at 300 percent of the federal poverty level, or a \$66,150 household income for a family of four. Those above that level who are currently covered on AllKids could keep their coverage until July 1, 2012.

- Allow the governor to transfer up to 4 percent of funds from long-term care facilities to community-based alternatives.

- Allow the state to recoup payments gained through fraud, as well as a 5 percent interest charge. It also would create a \$2,000 civil penalty for Medicaid fraud.

- Require patients to prove residency and provide a month’s worth of income

information to verify eligibility. It would also require patients to prove they are eligible each year. Pregnant women would be exempt from the annual verification.

- Create a moratorium on boosting the number of those eligible for Medicaid.

- Require by 2015 that half of Medicaid patients receive so-called coordinated care, administered in a network of health care providers and focused on preventive treatment and connecting patients to a primary care doctor.

- Allow for 90-day supplies of some non-narcotic drugs, which will cut down on dispensing costs paid by the state to pharmacies.

- Cut the interest on overdue payments to pharmacies from 2 percent to 1 percent.

- Upgrade the state’s electronic medical records systems. Funds spent on upgrades are eligible for a 90 percent federal match.

*Jamey Dunn and Lauren N. Johnson*

## LEGISLATIVE CHECKLIST

*Members of the 96th General Assembly took up issues in addition to the tax increase in the last days of the two-year legislative session.*



### Redistricting reforms

**SB 3976** The bill would add provisions to the redistricting process to protect minority voters in Illinois. The legislation would require that districts cannot be drawn based on minority populations in a way that would prevent a minority group from electing its candidates of choice. The bill, sponsored by Democratic Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie and co-sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Kwame Raoul, would also require four public redistricting hearings throughout the state. The measure passed in both chambers.



### Free rides for seniors

**SB 3778** Legislators approved a rollback of a program championed by for-

mer Gov. Rod Blagojevich that allowed senior citizens to use mass transit for free. Under the bill, sponsored by Chicago Democratic Sen. Donne Trotter, seniors who qualify for certain state aid, such as the circuit breaker program, would still ride for free. All other seniors would pay half price. Chicago Democratic Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie sponsored the bill in the House.

*The General Assembly failed to approve several pieces of legislation up for debate. Those measures, which died with the end of the session, included one that would have removed individuals appointed to more than 700 government positions with expired terms.*



### Medical marijuana

**SB1381** This measure would have created a pilot program to allow residents with chronic illnesses access to medical marijuana. Patients approved by the Illinois Department of Public Health or a person designated as an eligible patient's primary

caregiver would have been able to legally possess up to two ounces of dried marijuana or six plants — only three of which could be mature. The bill passed in the Senate, where it was sponsored by Alton Democratic Sen. William Haine, but did not receive the needed votes in the House. Skokie Democratic Rep. Lou Lang, the House sponsor, says he intends to introduce a similar bill in the new session.



### Union membership

**SB 3644** The measure would have barred employees who work for executive officers and primarily supervise others or help to shape policy from joining unions and participating in collective bargaining. According to Democratic Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, a sponsor of the bill, the Labor Relations Board would have the final say on who could be in the union. The bill would allow have allowed the governor to ask the board to reconsider some job titles. The House passed the measure, but the Senate didn't consider it.

*Janey Dunn and Lauren N. Johnson*

## Illinois loses U.S. House seat

When Illinois lawmakers draw up new legislative districts this year, they will have one fewer U.S. congressional seat to consider.

Nationwide, 12 congressional seats will shift states, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures. Most of the states losing seats are in the Midwest and Northeast, with the exception of Louisiana. Those gaining representation are in the southern and western parts of the country.

Illinois lost one seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in the 2000 remap, and two seats after both the 1990 and 1980 population counts. Since 1970, when Illinois' seat count held steady, the state has gone from 24 to 18 seats.

With 12.8 million residents, Illinois showed a 3.3 percent population growth since 2000, when the population was 12.4 million. That has slowed from an 8.6 percent growth between 1990 and 2000. The state remains the fifth largest in the nation. Congressional districts in Illinois will average 714,688 residents.

John Jackson, a visiting professor with the Paul Simon Public Policy Institute at Southern Illinois University, says Illinois'

flagging economy likely played a large role in its slowed growth. "I'm sure that our loss of jobs and our loss of people go hand and hand. ... We need to turn around the economy in Illinois. I don't sneeze off the fact that we have some variables that we need to change."

However, Jackson says the picture painted by some members of the business sector, of people fleeing Illinois en masse for the more business-friendly climates of neighboring states, might be overblown. Iowa and Missouri each lost one congressional seat, and Indiana's count was static. "[These states are] not the Garden of Eden, perhaps," he says.

Jackson says Republicans will likely offer to sacrifice the seat of one of the new members elected in November in an attempt to minimize the chance that the Democrat-controlled state legislature will opt to draw its own congressional map instead of following the recommendation of the current delegation.

He says state lawmakers will consider populations of the current districts when drawing the new map, but it probably won't be the deciding factor.

Instead, Jackson believes the current congressional delegation's opinions of the freshman members will play a much larger role in deciding who "gets voted off the island" than shifts in population. "It will be the guy they like the least."

Jackson points to the last time Illinois lost a seat, when there was "a bipartisan agreement to throw [former Democratic U.S. Rep.] David Phelps overboard." He was drawn into the same district as Republican and fellow incumbent Rep. John Shimkus.

"I think this one will be an easier one than some of those in the past because you have four brand-new freshmen, and they are all Republican. ... I am not sure that the Republicans will fight real hard for any of those four."

Jackson says Democrats — who hold both chambers of the state legislature and the governor's office — will likely be much more concerned with their battles to protect their own districts, with "self-interest being the No. 1 factor."

The census bureau will release this month data for redistricting, which drills down numbers to a block-by-block level.

*Janey Dunn*



## **DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL Biggert, Kirk buck Republican party**

Two members of the Illinois congressional delegation strayed from the party line to vote for the repeal of the policy that kept gay men and women from serving openly in the military.

The new law, signed by President Barack Obama, marks the end of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which the military has operated under since 1993. More than 13,000 troops had been discharged from the military when their sexual orientation was exposed, according to the White House.

U.S. Rep Judy Biggert of Hinsdale broke from the Illinois Republican congressional delegation, being one of only 15 GOP members of the House to do so in a 250-175 vote. The other five Illinois Republican House members voted against the repeal.

"I really think that any American that is willing to put their life at risk in defense of our country and freedom should be allowed to do so, regardless of his or her sexual orientation," Biggert says.

"I just don't believe in discrimination in any form. I really want to put the best

[soldiers] in the field, not the gay soldiers or straight soldiers or brown-eyed soldiers, but just the best soldiers, period."

Meanwhile, U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois was among eight Republican senators to vote for the repeal, which was approved 63-31 in the Senate.

While serving in the House, Kirk in May voted against the repeal, triggering complaints from gay constituents. But on the campaign trail, the 21-year Navy reserve officer promised not to formulate a stance again until he had read a report on the policy from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. That report recommended the repeal, which Kirk said in a prepared statement sparked his decision, along with consultation of military leaders. The joint chiefs' report also predicted a low risk of disruption with the repeal of don't ask, don't tell.

Biggert, who also pointed to the military support for the change, says she was not bothered by bucking the trend of her party. "I've always said when it comes to Democrats, I'll vote with them when they're right and against them when they're wrong. I just thought it was the right thing to do. I don't think this is

something that's a party-line vote. You vote your conscience."

The repeal "marked a defining civil rights moment in our nation's history," says Paul DeMiglio, senior communications manager for the Servicemembers Legal Defense Fund, a nonpartisan, nonprofit watchdog and policy organization based in Washington, D.C.

"Don't ask, don't tell's repeal bridges the political divide between Republicans and Democrats and demonstrates that an overwhelming majority of Americans on both sides of the aisle favor open service. As we move toward the next steps of dismantling don't ask, don't tell this year, we continue to welcome bipartisan support in the ongoing fight for equality in the armed forces."

A November survey by the Pew Research Center found that 58 percent of Americans were in favor of allowing gays to serve openly.

DeMiglio says: "Service members can still be fired for being gay. In 2011, we face certification of repeal, a 60-day congressional period, initial open service regulations, implementation and probably congressional oversight."

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*

## **UIC to study how youth view bullying based on sexuality**

The University of Illinois at Chicago is one of six organizations awarded grants totaling \$4.1 million from the Ford Foundation to support research related to youth sexuality.

Stacey Horn, associate professor of educational psychology at the university, says the grant "provides an exciting opportunity for high-quality research" into a previously under-examined area of human development.

Horn and her team proposed a four-year study to examine the relationship between how adolescents view sexuality-related bullying and how schools and social forces shape those views. UIC received a \$730,000 grant to conduct the research, which Horn will lead.

"Especially with younger adolescents," Horn says, "it will be interesting

to learn about the developmental progression" of their views of sexuality-related bullying.

With a focus on Chicago-area public schools, the researchers will first conduct a survey to determine the types and incidence of bullying.

That will be followed by individual interviews with seventh-, ninth- and 11th-graders to assess the variables present in particular incidents of bullying and the extent to which the adolescents considered the actions to be bullying.

Finally, researchers will meet with the interviewees again to try to understand how the students' reactions are shaped within high schools and colleges, especially with regard to Illinois' anti-bullying law.

Horn's team also will collaborate with the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance to produce an educational campaign aimed at secondary education students and school personnel.

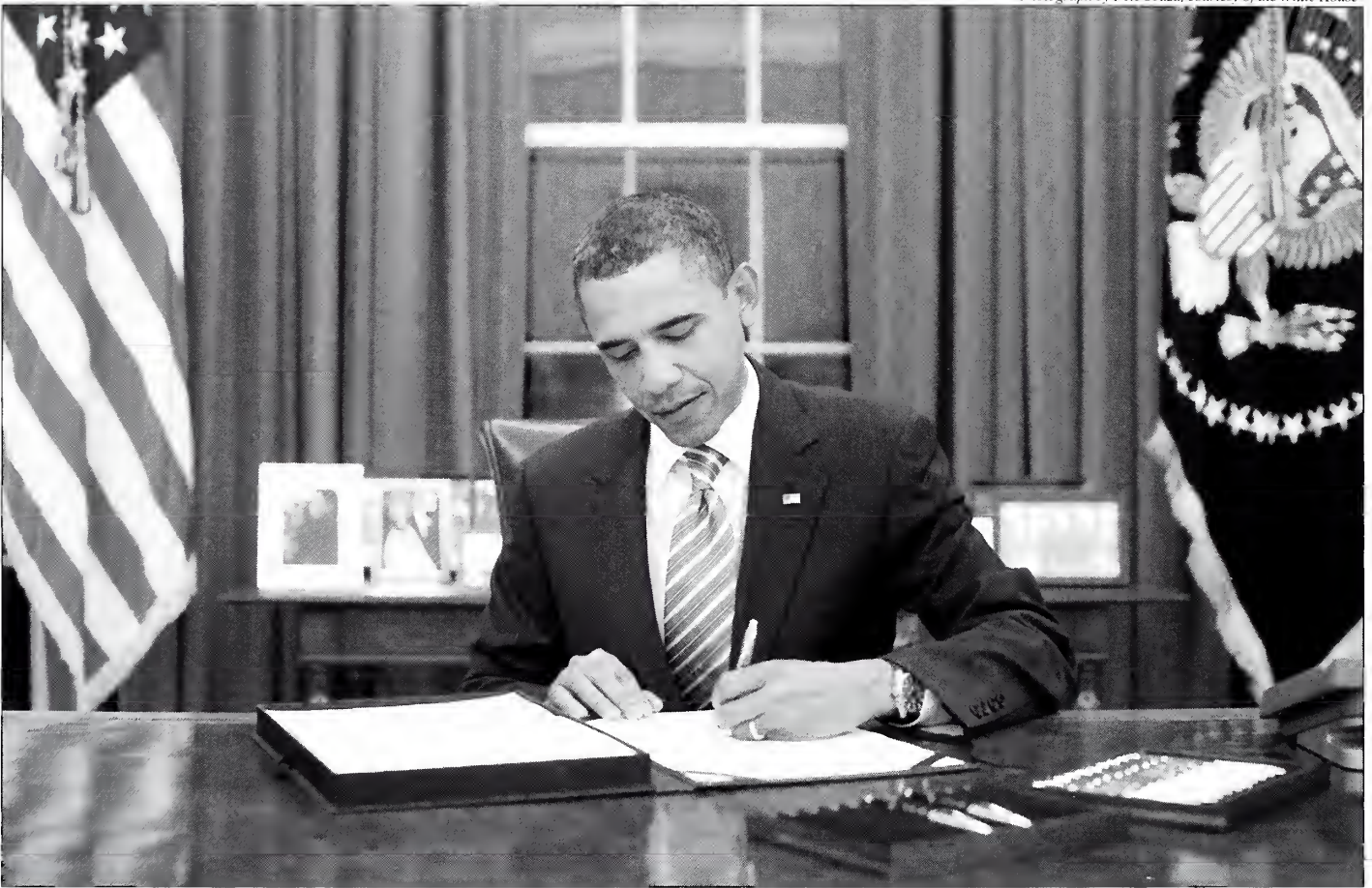
Preliminary results from the research team's study are expected within the next few years.

The Ford Foundation selected the six winners from more than 200 submissions. The other winning proposals include research on sexuality education, sexual socialization and gender identity, sexual health outcomes within particular youth groups, public attitudes regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual and transsexual sexuality, and social and cultural values in regard to sexuality among Latino youth.

*Stacie Lewis*

For more news see the *Illinois Issues* website at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>





*President Barack Obama signs the Food Safety Modernization Act on January 4.*

## **Food safety: Now, the fight's for money**

A sweeping new law that gives the U.S. Food and Drug Administration the power to recall tainted food now faces a fight for \$1.4 billion to fund it.

The overhaul of the nation's food safety laws was written by U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois and signed last month by President Barack Obama.

Max Gleichman, a spokesman for Durbin, says, "That will certainly be the next step, making sure the implementation of this bill [occurs] and the agency receives the funding as authorized — a substantial increase in funding for inspection programs and for trace-back ability and other upgrades that the FDA desperately needs.

"The next stage of this, of course, is to negotiate the appropriations process and make sure the changes we called for in the new law are able to be accomplished and that the FDA has the funding necessary to accomplish those changes."

The law, which Durbin has been championing for a decade, faced a series of other challenges on the way to being passed, including threats of a filibuster.

The House first passed the bill in 2009, but the Senate did not consider it until fall of 2010. The Senate passed the bill in November and sent it to the House, where a constitutional problem emerged with a provision, according to Gleichman. The problem was fixed, and the Senate and House voted on it again. In total, the Senate passed the measure twice and the House voted three times, if the previous version that didn't go before the president is counted.

In a prepared statement, Durbin said: "With the signing of this bill into law, the FDA finally has the tools it needs to ensure that the food on dinner tables and store shelves is safe. The new law will have a dramatic impact on the way the FDA operates — providing it with more resources for inspection, mandatory recall authority and the technology to trace an outbreak back to its source."

The new law will also spark standards

for safe production of fruit and vegetables; set risk-based inspection of food-processing facilities; create standards for the safe transportation of food; require importers to verify the safety of food from their suppliers; and give the FDA authority to block foods from facilities or countries that refuse inspection, according to a White House blog post by FDA Commissioner Dr. Margaret Hamburg.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 48 million Americans a year get sick with food-borne illnesses such as salmonella. Of the Americans who become ill, 128,000 are hospitalized and 3,000 die.

When Obama signed the bill on January 4, Jean Halloran, director of food policy initiatives at the Consumers Union, said in a prepared statement: "It's a great day for consumers. When common foods like spinach and peanut products have to be pulled from stores because people are dying, clearly, there's a problem. This legislation will go a long way toward making our food safer."

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*



## Federal law may bolster Illinois' economy

Illinois' economy may get a boost from a package of tax cuts and unemployment benefit extensions signed into law by President Barack Obama.

The legislation signed by Obama in December is an \$858 billion federal income tax cut package and unemployment benefit extension that would affect millions of people nationwide, including those in Illinois.

While the legislation does not add additional weeks of unemployment benefits beyond the current 99 weeks, it does give eligible unemployed workers more time to secure a new job while collecting the maximum benefits.

The bipartisan agreement extends emergency unemployment benefits at their current level for 13 months, preventing an estimated 7 million workers nationwide from losing their benefits during the next year.

Illinois' current unemployment rate — 9.6 percent — hovers just above the national rate of 9.4 percent reported for December. The state's jobless rate has dropped for the last eight months.

"Falling unemployment rates even as more people look for work is another encouraging sign that the Illinois econo-

my is moving forward," Maureen O'Donnell, director of the Illinois Department of Employment Security, said in a written statement.

The extension of the tax cuts for the top earners in the country was part of a compromise Democrats made with Republicans to extend the unemployment benefits and move other legislation in the U.S. Senate.

"In Illinois, 70 percent of manufacturing companies file as individual taxpayers, which would have a huge impact on small businesses, not just manufacturers but retailers and other kinds of business as well," says Mark Denzler, vice president of government affairs at the Illinois Manufacturers' Association.

"It will keep the economy stimulated. One of the worst things you can do in poor economic times is to increase tax rates on individuals or companies," says Denzler.

Denzler says the extended unemployment benefits are paid by the federal government and won't have much of a direct impact on employers in Illinois. He says, however, one of the issues Illinois will have to deal with in the next year is the state's unemployment trust fund, which Denzler says is currently several

billion dollars in debt.

"Sometimes in this business, you've got to take the good with the bad," says Tim Drea, secretary treasurer of the Illinois AFL-CIO, referring to the extension of the tax cut for wealthy Americans. Drea said he believes the middle class tax cuts would increase consumer spending in Illinois.

"I believe when working families see the extra 2 percent in their [January 15] or [January 31] paychecks, somebody making \$50,000 is going to see an extra \$1,000 in their pocket. That's going to have a positive impact ... that's real money for working families," says Drea.

Ralph Martire, executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, agreed the new tax cuts will help but said public spending is needed, too.

"For every dollar that individuals get, they take it and spend in their local economies, so when you extend unemployment insurance, you've really done a positive thing," he says.

Martire adds, "The things that generate the greatest multiplier effects are not at all ever tax cuts; it is always, in fact, increased public spending."

*Lauren N. Johnson*

## Borrowing to pay for college grows

More college students are borrowing, and those who do are borrowing more. That's according to a study by the Washington D.C.-based Pew Research Center.

According to the December report, graduates who received a bachelor's degree in 2008 borrowed 50 percent more (in inflation-adjusted dollars) than did graduates in 1996. "Among 2008 graduates who borrowed, the average loan for a bachelor's degree recipient was more than \$23,000, compared with slightly more than \$17,000 in 1996."

For Illinoisans, the statistics are similar. In Illinois, the average debt was \$22,049 for students who graduated in 2009, according to the Institute for College Access and Success, an Oakland, Calif.-based nonprofit.

One of the main reasons for the increase in student borrowing is that more students attend private, for-profit universities and colleges, says Richard Fry, senior

researcher for the Pew Research Center.

According to the report, the private, for-profit sector has grown more rapidly than the public and private nonprofit institutions. "Students who attend for-profit colleges are more likely than other students to borrow, and they typically borrow larger amounts," the report states.

Fry says, "As a matter of fact, when you include associate's and undergraduate certificates, almost one out of five these days is being granted by for-profit colleges and universities."

The report also noted that students at for-profit colleges tend to have lower incomes, are older and are more likely to be from minority groups than those at not-for-profits.

Other factors explain the boom in borrowing and its costs, Fry notes.

"At least for the nation as a whole, it is true that the costs of college attendance have been rising over the last few years. I'm looking at Department of Education figures that go back to 1999, and within

any of the broad sectors of higher education, it is true once you subtract out ... the grants that students receive, it does look like out-of-pocket costs of college are rising on average nationally," he says.

"Another factor that may be contributing to the rise in the cost of borrowing is that one of the ways that students and their families finance their college education is they work. Student employment is a source of financing for college expenses. ... I would say not as many undergraduates are working as was once the case."

"Back in 2001," he says, "58 percent of the nation's 18- to 24-[year-old] undergraduates had a job. Now, partly due to the Great Recession, less than half of the nation's undergraduates are working. So I assume the earnings, as well, that they're able to generate out of the labor market have fallen. And so, at least nationally, college has gotten more expensive, and students are not working as much as they once were."

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*

## Panel unveils plan to cut poverty

More than 1 million Illinoisans live below the federal poverty line. One organization is seeking to raise hundreds of thousands of Illinois residents out of extreme poverty by the middle of the decade.

According to a report from the Illinois Commission on the Elimination of Poverty, more than 750,000 residents live in extreme poverty with a household income of under \$11,025, which is half of the federal poverty level income. The group released recommendations to cut the number of residents in extreme poverty in half by 2015.

The commission produced its report under the theory that poverty is the result of an absence of human rights. The group worked to find ways to help people in need find affordable housing, health care and child care. They also addressed accessibility to nutritious foods, reliable transportation and adequate education and training.

The group recommends Illinois create a statewide transitional jobs program that would help 40,000 people return to work and eliminate categories of workers not covered by minimum wage, such as restaurant servers who receive tips.

To make sure those living in severe poverty are receiving all eligible assistance, the commission says the state should create educational programs to ensure that those entitled to federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families funds are receiving them. It also recommended streamlining the process by allowing residents to sign up for multiple aid programs with one application. The report calls for increased TANF benefits because it is possible to receive those funds and still be below the extreme poverty line.

The commission endorsed a change to the law that would prohibit the state from asking job applicants about their criminal histories.

The report recommends tripling the earned income tax credit, which is meant to encourage employment and assist low-income families; increasing rental subsidies for individuals living in poverty; and providing more scholarships to community colleges for low-income students. The plan also suggests giving to single people some benefits that are currently only available to families.

However, the commission recognizes that state funds are tight. "Initial changes should not add to the state's budget difficulties. As the commission advocates for the incremental adoption of its recommendations until 2015, it will make adjustments in the implementation of this plan that reflect the changes and opportunities that will be encountered during that time."

Rep. Karen Yarbrough, a Democrat from Maywood, who sponsored the legislation that created the group and commissioned the report, says she intends to focus on the proposed jobs program.

Yarbrough said at a Chicago news conference that the release of a report with specific recommendations and a timeline for reducing poverty signals a time for action. "This puts a real face on who we're trying to help. But we must not lose sight of the fact that by helping them, we are helping everyone in Illinois. This plan is an important step toward addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in Illinois. Because it's such a large step forward, no longer can we say that this issue must have more study. We've done the study."

*Jamey Dunn*

## Hungry Illinoisans

An analysis of Gallup survey results during the first half of 2010 shows that nearly 16.5 percent of Illinoisans reported that there were times during the previous year when they did not have enough food.

The state-by-state analysis was done by the Food Research and Action Center [FRAC] and based on data from the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, which has gathered information from more than 1 million families since January 2008. Washington, D.C.-based FRAC is a national anti-hunger lobbying organization. For Illinois, the increase from 2009 was less than 1 percentage point.

"It really underscores what many individuals and families in our state are experiencing every day, and that's the struggle against hunger," says Diane Doherty, executive director of the Illinois Hunger Coalition. "The reality is the recovery is really not helping those people who need it the most.

"It's really frightening when you look at the state of Illinois and the fiscal challenges we face," Doherty says. "I just think unemployment is going to go on the same way, and food hardship is going to continue to stand very high, and more people are going to fall into poverty. I think it's a very scary time."

Illinois has 1.8 million people who collect food stamp benefits. Doherty says, "These are really pretty staggering numbers."

Tom Green, spokesman for the Illinois Department of Human Services, which administers the state's food stamp program,

says DHS "is hiring human service caseworkers to meet the increased demand for services. We have also made food stamp applications available online and by phone to encourage more people [to] sign up for this important benefit for eligible families."

To be eligible for food stamps under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a family of three cannot earn more than \$1,984 a month.

Doherty notes that food stamps often don't go far enough. And some food pantries may not be able to provide meals more than once a month.

"Typically, when I ask people, they say, 'I always feed my children first, and if there is food left I feed myself.' More and more adults are skipping breakfast or lunch, and they're also cutting back on the portion size," she says.

"And they really do skimp on the nutritional values, and they really don't know how long the food is going to last them. More and more people go to food pantries, and maybe they can only get food every other week or once a month."

Doherty recounts speaking to a woman with two children who had been out of work for five months. She told Doherty that she felt she had nowhere to turn. "That's not unusual. We're hearing that from so many people across the state of Illinois — not just northeastern Illinois — and they're calling and asking for help."

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*



## A century of change

A new book on Illinois birds was 100 years in the making.

*Illinois Birds: A Century of Change* was recently published by the University of Illinois. The first comprehensive Illinois bird survey was conducted between 1906 and 1909 and repeated in 1956-58. A group of Illinois ornithologists undertook the research again as the 100-year anniversary of the first survey approached. The bird survey is the oldest standardized one in North America, says Jeff Walk, director of science for The Nature Conservancy in Illinois and one of the book's seven authors.

"The main take-home message for me was the incredible amount of land-use change that's happened over the last decade and the profound effect that land-use change has had on people and wildlife," Walk says. "For example, of the people we surveyed, they had the perception that forest habitat was declining, but in fact, the state has increased its forest area by about 1 million acres over the last 100 years. Forest bird populations in Illinois have been stable since at least the 1950s. On the other hand, there's been a big decline in grassland and

shrubland areas, and those birds, including some economically important birds like pheasants and quail, have declined."

The book includes photos of birds and the landscape from the three time periods surveyed.

The state has urbanized. A century ago, people primarily lived on farmland in Illinois, Walk notes. And so the researchers conducted bird surveys in urban areas, as well as rural.

"We found there are a number of birds that are actually adapting to urban areas," Walk says. "Canada geese that nest in subdivisions are a great example of that. Fifty years ago, there were no Canada geese nesting in Illinois. And even the state bird, the northern cardinal: 100 years ago, they were only found in southern Illinois, and now they occur statewide and in northern Illinois, and most of the places they occur are near residential areas."

The researchers found 26 species that thrive in the 2000s but were uncommon a half-century ago. Examples included the previously rare wild turkeys and wood ducks.

Other species declined, Walk says, noting that those are mostly birds associated with grassland and shrubland areas. Once-familiar birds such as bobolinks, meadowlarks, red-headed woodpeckers and loggerhead shrikes have "declined considerably in the last 100 years. In the 1900s [loggerhead shrikes] were among the most common species in the state, and now the loggerhead shrike is endangered in Illinois." That bird is found primarily in grassland areas with a few scattered trees in south-central Illinois, although Walk says a few pairs also were found in northern and central Illinois.

The researchers also surveyed people about their knowledge of birds. "One of the important things that we found because of doing the surveys of people, as well as counting birds, is there is a mismatch in terms of what is perceived as declines as opposed to what our bird surveys indicate. People thought it was forest birds, when in reality, it's the grassland, shrubland birds that are in most need of conservation."

*Maureen Foertsch McKinney*

*Photographs courtesy of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign*



*Ornithologists Alfred Gross and Howard Ray and an assistant camp near Running Lake in Union County in the early 20th century. The guns pictured would have been used to collect both bird specimens and dinner.*



## Immigrant rights groups continue fight for citizenship law

Illinois immigrants' rights groups say they will continue to fight for a path to citizenship for illegal immigrants who were brought to the country as children, but passing the DREAM Act will likely be even more challenging now that new members of the U.S. Congress have been seated.

The DREAM Act would allow illegal immigrants who came to the country as children the chance to become citizens if they attend college or serve in the U.S. military. The bill failed in the Senate in December, with 55 U.S. senators voting for it and 41 in opposition. Because of a procedural move by Republicans, the bill needed 60 votes to move forward.

The Migration Policy Institute, a Washington-D.C.-based think tank, estimates that 95,000 Illinois youths would be eligible for potential citizenship under the measure.

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin led the push for the DREAM Act, while U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk voted against the bill. Kirk said in an October debate that he would not support immigration reforms, such as the DREAM Act, until officials can "restore the trust of the American people in the ability to administer our own border."

The Illinois Coalition for Immigration and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) organized grass-roots efforts backing the measure.

"There was an unbelievable amount of mobilization," says Joshua Hoyt, executive director of ICIRR. "I do not think there was a congressional district where the congresspeople were not feeling the organizing in their district."

Members of the Chicago-based Immigrant Youth Justice League held "Undocumented and Unafraid" rallies, lobbied members of Congress and went on hunger strikes. Hoyt says young people, many of whom were brought to the country as children, "coming out" as undocumented immigrants illustrated the need for the DREAM Act.

"This was the first time both in Illinois and nationally that the undocumented were no longer invisible. They were people."

Many young members of the league describe feelings of hopelessness when they realize that upon graduating high school, they cannot afford college, and even if they could, they would not be able to work legally in this country.

"I graduated in June of 2009. A day after my graduation, I attempted suicide

because I was tired, because I did not want to tell my mom we'd have to pay for my education out of our own pocket. And when schools gave me scholarships, I didn't want to put her through the pain of telling me that we still couldn't afford it. That's when a funeral started to look less expensive than four years of education at the school of my choice," Reyna Wences said at an Immigrant Youth Justice League demonstration in Chicago.

Opponents say lawmakers should not consider rewarding children for their parents' violation of the law. "I think everybody acknowledges that many of these kids didn't have a voice in this decision," says Ira Mehlman, a spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform. However, Mehlman says, "Whenever parents violate laws, they put their kids in difficult situations."

Durbin says he will continue to push for the DREAM Act. But now that Democrats have lost seats in the U.S. Senate and Republicans control the U.S. House, passing the bill will likely be more difficult.

Janey Dunn

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# 150 years later

Lincoln would probably be pleased to see that the United States is trying to nurture democracy in other lands, but on states' rights, he'd be concerned

by Michael Burlingame



*President Lincoln with Gen. George McClellan and group of officers in 1862 at Antietam, Md.*

If today Abraham Lincoln could see what has become of his country — and of the world — since the Civil War, which began 150 years ago, how might he react? That conflict began as a struggle over states' rights in general and the right to secede in particular. He would doubtless be pleased that the doctrine of secession is dead in the United States. To be sure, a few outliers have forlornly suggested that it be revived, but they have gained no traction politically.

On the question of states' rights, Lincoln might feel some concern. Though emphatically a nationalist, he did not favor an all-powerful central government. In January 1865, when Massachusetts Sen. Charles Sumner was filibustering Lincoln's attempt to implement a Reconstruction program, the president remarked that Sumner "hopes ... to change this government from its original form" by "making it a strong centralized power."



Some recent critics on the right, such as economics professor Thomas Di Lorenzo of Loyola University Maryland, mistakenly argue that Lincoln created the strong federal government that since 1865 has drastically reduced the power of the states. Such criticism is unjustified. The modern bureaucratic, administrative state, with power concentrated in Washington, D.C., is a product of post-Civil War industrialization and urbanization, along with the subsequent emergence of the United States as a world power. In fact, the federal government during the generation after Lincoln's death was quite weak. The foundations of the modern centralized welfare state were laid by the Progressives in the early 20th century and were strengthened dramatically during the New Deal of the 1930s, the Fair Deal of the 1940s and the Great Society of the 1960s. Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson — not Lincoln — are the true fathers of the current strong federal government.

To be sure, Lincoln expanded the powers of the presidency to meet a great national emergency, but he insisted that what was appropriate during a Civil War was inappropriate for peacetime. Among his most controversial acts was to suspend the privilege of the writ of habeas corpus. To justify that decision, he cited the Constitution's provision that "The Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus shall not be suspended, unless when in Cases of Rebellion or Invasion the public Safety may require it." To Democrats who objected that he was paving the way for a dictatorship, he replied that he could "no more be persuaded that the government can constitutionally take no strong measure in time of rebellion, because it can be shown that the same could not be lawfully taken in time of peace, than I can be persuaded that a particular drug is not good medicine for a sick man, because it can be shown to not be good food for a well one."

Though the Civil War began as a struggle to maintain national unity in the face of a secessionist rebellion, it also became a conflict to end slavery once Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863. If alive today, Lincoln would be glad to see that chattel slavery is dead and that blacks enjoy full citizenship rights.

Lincoln was murdered because he publicly endorsed the enfranchisement of some blacks. On April 11, 1865, when he made that announcement in a speech at the White House, one member of his audience — John Wilkes Booth — said to his companions: "That means nigger citizenship. Now by God I'll put him through! That is the last speech he will ever make." Three days later Booth carried out his threat. Lincoln thus should be considered as much a martyr to the cause of black citizenship rights as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., Medgar Evers or the other champions of the civil rights revolution who were murdered in the 1960s.

Lincoln's support of emancipation and black citizenship rights led Frederick Douglass to call him "emphatically the black man's president."

During the Civil War, the Union Army initially refused to allow blacks to join. In time, that policy was changed. As Lincoln watched one of the first black regiments march past the White House, he was asked what he thought of them. Obviously pleased, he said: "It'll do! It'll do!" He would probably approve equally strongly of a black president, of blacks in Congress and black officeholders on other levels of government, all elected in part by the votes of black men and women.

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***Lincoln might also be displeased with the fate of democracy in recent times. He hoped that the Civil War would vindicate popular government and that other countries would emulate the American example of granting common ordinary people a significant voice in their governance.***

On the other hand, Lincoln would surely condemn forms of slavery that persist to this day. As Ron Soodalter, co-author of *The Slave Next Door: Human Trafficking and Slavery in America Today*, has pointed out: "There are an estimated 27 million people enslaved in the world today. That's more than twice as many as were taken from Africa in chains during the entire 350 years of the Atlantic Slave Trade. It is one of the three most lucrative criminal enterprises, along with drugs and guns. And in the United States, it has reached epidemic proportions. Victims are trafficked here from at least 35 countries and are held in bondage — and under the radar — in every state, working at a variety of jobs. They are of all races, all types, all ethnicities, sharing in common only the inability to leave. They are controlled by violence and are exploited to make money for their controllers. These people are, in the most literal sense, slaves."

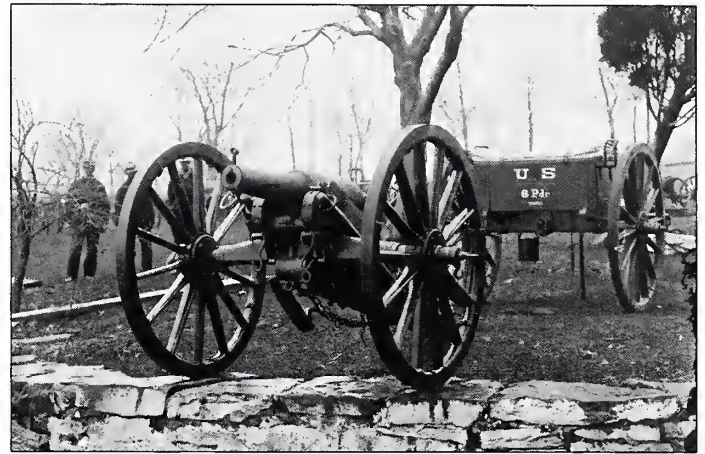
Lincoln might also be displeased with the fate of democracy in recent times. He hoped that the Civil War would vindicate popular government and that other countries would emulate the American example of granting common ordinary people a significant voice in their governance. A few weeks after the war began, he told presidential secretary John Hay: "Some of our northerners seem inclined to think that this war is to result in the entire abolition of slavery." He added that a "venerable and most respectable gentleman, impresses upon me most earnestly the propriety of enlisting the slaves in our army." But Lincoln demurred: "For my own part, I consider the central idea pervading this struggle is the necessity that is upon us, of proving that popular government is not an absurdity. We must settle this question now, whether in a free government the minority have the right to break upon the government whenever they choose. If we fail it will go far to prove the incapacity of the people to govern themselves."

As for abolishing slavery or enlisting blacks into the army, Lincoln said: "There may be one consideration used in stay of such final judgment, but that is not for us to use in advance. That is, there exists in our case, an instance of a vast and far reaching disturbing element [slavery], which the history of no other free nation will probably ever present. That, however, is not for us to say at present. Taking the government as we found it, we will see if the majority can preserve it."

Throughout the war, Lincoln emphasized that the struggle was more than just an instance of a rebellious province being subdued in the name of national unity, nor was it simply a crusade to eliminate slavery. Above and beyond those important goals loomed a greater one: proving that people were capable of self-government.



*A group believed to be slaves on a plantation in South Carolina*



*A gun at the arsenal in Washington, D.C.*

On July 4, 1861, Lincoln told the newly assembled Congress that the war “is essentially a People’s contest.” For Unionists, “it is a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men — to lift artificial weights from all shoulders; to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all; to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life. Yielding to partial and temporary departures, from necessity, this is the leading object of the government for whose existence we contend.”

The following year, Lincoln offered Congress a variation on that central theme. He had already announced his intention to issue an emancipation proclamation. In urging Congress to pass constitutional amendments facilitating emancipation, he said: “The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. ... In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free — honorable alike in what we give, and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last best hope of earth.”

In 1863, Lincoln reiterated his central point at Gettysburg, where he described the Civil War as a struggle to assure that “government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.”

The next year, Lincoln told troops who had called at the White House: “I almost always feel inclined, when I happen to say anything to soldiers, to impress upon them in a few brief remarks the importance of success in this contest. It is not merely for to-day, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children’s children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives. I beg you to remember this, not merely for my sake, but for yours. I happen temporarily to occupy this big White House. I am a living witness that any one of your children may look to come here as my father’s child has. It is in order that each of you may have through this free government which we have enjoyed, an open field and a fair chance for your industry, enterprise and intelligence; that you may all have equal privileges in the race of life, with all its desirable human aspirations. It is for this the struggle should be maintained, that we may not lose our birthright. ... The nation is worth fighting for, to secure such an inestimable jewel.”

Surveying the American scene, Lincoln today would probably feel gratified that democracy flourishes in the United States, but

he might well be dismayed by the assault on it being waged by its opponents, most notably Islamic totalitarians. He would likely see striking parallels between today’s War on Terror and the Civil War. The Confederates were, in his view, the enemies of democracy, for they rejected the fundamental principle of majority rule. The jihadists of today are also enemies of democracy, for they do not believe that governments are based on the consent of the governed but rather on the word of Allah. Laws are not to be made by popularly elected legislatures, enforced by popularly elected executives and interpreted by judges chosen by the people or appointed by popularly elected executives and confirmed by popularly elected legislatures. Instead only Sharia law, as divinely revealed in the Koran and in the sayings of the prophet Muhammad, must be obeyed.

The main enemies of democracy in the 20th century — German nationalists, Nazi bigots, Japanese imperialists, Communist totalitarians — have been replaced by Islamists bent on establishing a worldwide caliphate. Lincoln resisted the Confederates with steely determination because he above all wished to vindicate democracy. He would probably be pleased to see that the United States is resisting the radical Islamists and trying to nurture democracy in lands where despotism has long reigned.

At the same time, Lincoln might be dismayed by the recent “democracy recession” around the world. Fraudulent elections in Burma, Egypt, Haiti, the Ivory Coast and elsewhere dishearten supporters of democracy. Popular government has also suffered setbacks in Russia, Venezuela, Turkey, Thailand, China and other nations. According to Freedom House, which monitors democratic developments around the world, political and civic freedom has been waning rather than waxing internationally during the past four years.

Much as Lincoln might be gratified by the survival of the intact American union, the elimination of chattel slavery in the United States, the implementation of black citizenship rights and the general spread of democracy abroad, he might be disappointed that “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” is not more universally enjoyed. ▢

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# A city's shame

Lincoln's hometown was  
the scene of the bloody race riots  
that triggered the start  
of the NAACP

by Tara McClellan McAndrew

For decades, Springfield couldn't look itself in the mirror.

This homespun city trumpeted its role in creating Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, but when asked about its 1908 race riots that left at least seven dead and more than 100 injured, the city looked away.

When the first modern accounting of the riots — the short history, *Summer of Rage* by James Krohe Jr. — was published by the Sangamon County Historical Society in 1973, Springfield historian Cullom Davis wrote in the forward: "Even 65 years after the killing and pillage ended, many thoughtful citizens object to public discussion of this sensitive subject. ... The purpose of this brief history is not to embarrass the city of Springfield or stir racial feelings but to illuminate a dark recess in our history."

While the "race war," as the national press called it, wasn't discussed in Springfield for generations, the nation said plenty. The riots' greatest critics helped form the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in response.

Springfield may never come to terms with this part of its past. But it's trying. Since the 1990s, efforts have been increasing to help us understand — and lately, even accept responsibility for — the incendiary summer of 1908.

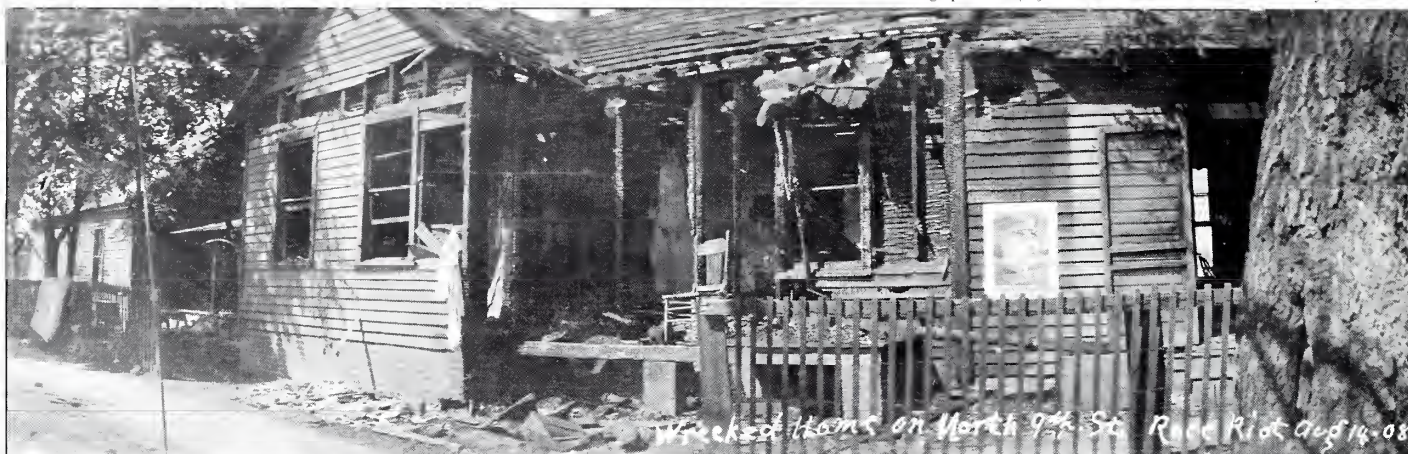


Ruins after the riot  
at Springfield Ill.,

*In August of 1908, homes in Springfield were destroyed in race-based rioting.*

Photograph courtesy of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum





A home on Ninth Street is damaged during rioting.

In 1908, Springfield was a divided town, geographically and racially. There was Springfield proper, the bulk of town where mostly whites lived and worked; then there was a defined downtown vice district and adjacent black district which, in locals' opinion, stretched northeast like a metastasizing tumor.

The vice district, or "Levee," was the high crime district and bane of proper Springfieldians, both white and black, according to Roberta Senechal de la Roche's 2008 book, *In Lincoln's Shadow: The 1908 Race Riot in Springfield, Illinois*. It was home to many blacks and black-owned businesses, along with opium dens, saloons, brothels and gambling parlors that operated openly with the unstated approval of corrupt city officials who depended on their support because of the city's ward system of government. Like parasites, one fed the other.

Springfield whites saw the Levee and the "Badlands," the area where blacks lived in modest homes or hovels, as nearly the same — the root of lawlessness. (Never mind that "proper" white Springfieldians eagerly participated in that lawlessness, according to William Lloyd Clark's self-published 1909 booklet, *Hell at Midnight in Springfield: Or a Burning History of the Sin and Shame of the Capital City of Illinois*.)

In June 1908, a black man named Joe James came to town, caroused in the Levee and landed in jail. While running a jail errand on the Fourth of July, he had a bender in the Levee. What he did afterward is unclear.

That night, a man broke into the home of Clergy Ballard, a white man, and ended up in his teenage daughter's room. Ballard

fought the man and was fatally wounded. Joe James was later found blocks away. Ballard's outraged family believed he was the culprit and beat James until police returned him to jail.

James admitted he was too inebriated to remember the night's events and swore he didn't remember attacking Ballard. Amid calls for his lynching, the judge delayed James' trial to let tempers defuse. Instead they simmered, feeling that "justice ... was being cheated," wrote Krohe.

While James awaited trial, Mabel Hallam, a married white woman, claimed that a black man raped her on August 13. It was front page news the next day. The *Illinois State Register* proclaimed: "Dragged From Her Bed and Outraged by Negro." Hallam "tentatively" identified George Richardson as her attacker from a group of black laborers working in her neighborhood, wrote de la Roche. Richardson joined James in jail.

That hot afternoon on August 14, a menacing crowd gathered at the jail. So Sheriff Charles Werner had James and Richardson secreted to Bloomington in a car borrowed from Springfield restaurateur Harry Loper. Werner may have been trying to protect his prisoners and himself. According to an existing state law from at least 1905, a sheriff or police chief can lose his position permanently if an inmate is removed from his jail and lynched.

When the growing mob of thousands learned it had been duped, it threw bricks, according to *Something So Horrible: The Springfield Race Riot of 1908*, based on the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum's centennial exhibition of the riots. After word spread that Loper had loaned his car for the prisoners' safety, the

mob charged to his downtown restaurant.

Because Loper had tried to help the black prisoners, the crowd cried for his lynching, according to the August 15, 1908, *Illinois State Journal*. Springfield Mayor Roy Reece pleaded for calm but was pushed aside.

The crowd demolished Loper's business and burned his car. Sixty-five years later, Springfieldian William Lee, a white man who was 26 during the riot, recalled that raid in an oral history recorded by what is now the University of Illinois Springfield. "I seen ... one of the dry goods or clothing merchants out on the street picking bricks ... and throwing them through Loper's Restaurant. And, of course, I went down into Loper's, and I and (a friend) went down and knocked the cash register over and got the change out," he said, laughing.

Then the rioters ran for the Levee, where they ransacked and stole weapons from the businesses of blacks and those who helped them. Some blacks fled while others tried to defend their buildings from rooftops "with these old Springfield rifles," said Lee. "Well, I was standing across on the west side of Washington Street with my hand up on a telegraph pole and — Zing, Zing! — the slivers just flew above my fingers and I left."

John Wilson, a black Springfieldian who was 19 during the riots, said in his UIS oral history: "You know how a crowd comes in a parade? That's how they come, breaking windows, going in, taking what they wanted. People were up there in the area of Washington Street shooting down on you as you was coming up. They never did tell you the truth about how many people were killed."



About midnight, rioters headed for the adjacent Badlands area, where they did their worst.

"There was a Jewish fellow and he went out and hollered, 'All white folks hand out a white sheet and put it on their fence,'" said Nathan Cohn in his UIS oral history. Cohn was 12 during the riots. "There was a lot of white folks following this fellow. ... They got hold of a colored fellow, and they didn't have no ropes to hang him. They wanted to hang him. So whoever was at the head of it looked around at the yard across the street and he seen a clothesline. So he went across the street and took the clothesline off and hung this guy up. I seen it. Put it around his neck and put it on a tree and just pulled him up."

Scott Burton, a black barber, had sent his family to safety and then guarded his turf with a gun. The mob beat him, lynched him and mutilated his body.

Before rioters were stopped by authorities about 2:30 a.m., they had burned black homes to the ground and decimated a four-block area of the Badlands.

The next day, even with hundreds of militia patrolling the city, a crowd of about 1,000 (according to de la Roche) gathered in front of the State Arsenal, across from the Statehouse. The governor had ordered militia to protect blacks seeking refuge there. The militia kept the mob from breaking in.

Angered, some ran to the nearby home of William Donnegan, an elderly, prosperous black man who had been Abraham Lincoln's shoemaker, had helped employ southern blacks (according to the August 16, 1908, *Illinois State Register*) and had married a white woman. Rioters dragged him from his family, slit his throat and lynched him.

Less than a month after Donnegan's death, Mabel Hallam — whose allegation of rape against George Richardson sparked the riots — confessed that she had not been assaulted by anyone. She and her family left town.

After an investigation, a special grand jury indicted more than 80 people with riot-related charges, but repeated attempts to get convictions from the all-white, all-Springfield juries were hopeless. One man identified as a riot leader was — on the fourth trial — found guilty of petty theft.

The riots killed three blacks and four

whites, though for decades locals contended there were more deaths. At least 101 people were injured, more than 60 homes and businesses wrecked and dozens of black citizens run out of town, according to the June 1, 2008, *State Journal-Register*.

Tourists poured in to see the damage and buy souvenirs, such as the photo scrapbook quickly printed by the *Illinois State Register*. Writers and reformers came to learn why the race riots occurred.

It wasn't about race, Springfield protested; it was about bad behavior. "Few in the white community ever expressed sympathy for the black victims of the violence, and many believed that blacks were to blame for the riot in the first place and that rioters had attacked only 'bad Negroes,'" de la Roche wrote. Others blamed the city's corrupt government, which fostered lawlessness, or the city's ward system, which gave the town's vice and black districts power to sway aldermanic elections.

Likewise, modern theories about the cause of the riots vary. A common one is that James' and Richards' alleged crimes sparked simmering racial tension fueled by whites competing with blacks for jobs and housing. But de la Roche, whose book is the only in-depth analysis of the Springfield riots, disagrees. There wasn't much competition in Springfield, she says, but, as in most of post-Civil War America, there was bigotry.

Springfield City Historian Curtis Mann says he's found "incidents in the local papers showing there were conflicts between African-Americans and whites going back to the 1800s. The paper was more on the side of the whites; blacks were portrayed as being less than good citizens."

By 1908, some blacks were becoming successful: running businesses, moving into white neighborhoods and acquiring land. To Springfield's whites, the riots were a way to reduce the city's lawlessness and "keep blacks in their place," de la Roche wrote.

In this sense Springfield's riots weren't unique. Between 1900 and 1917, race riots occurred in Springfield, Ohio; Springfield, Mo; Evansville, Ind.; and New York City. All were "expulsion" riots, according to de la Roche, meant to rid the cities of blacks.

## The timeline

**July 4-5, 1908** Joe James, a black man on leave from jail, is attacked by white males for allegedly invading the home of white man Clergy Ballard and killing him. James returns to jail.

**August 13, 1908** Mabel Hallam, a white married woman, says George Richardson, a black man, raped her. Richardson is jailed.

**August 14, 1908** A lynching party gathers at the county jail, demanding Richardson and James. Sheriff Charles Werner whisks the two to Bloomington in a borrowed car. The mob learns Harry Loper loaned the car and destroys it and his restaurant. The mob heads for the vice district and black sections of town where rioters beat blacks, destroy their businesses and homes, and lynch black barber Scott Burton. The militia arrives that evening.

**August 15, 1908** A mob tries to enter the State Arsenal, where blacks are sheltered for safety. Forced back by militia, the mob runs to the nearby home of black man William Donnegan and lynches him.

**Early September, 1908** Mabel Hallam admits to a grand jury that she had not been raped by George Richardson or any other man.

**September through December, 1908** A grand jury charges nearly 80 people, including four policemen who helped the rioters, with 107 felonies. Only one man is found guilty — of petty crime.

**October 23, 1908** After being tried and found guilty, Joe James is hanged for the murder of Clergy Ballard.

**February 12, 1909** About 750 city and national dignitaries celebrate the centennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth at the State Arsenal, where blacks were sheltered during the riots. Blacks were not allowed at the celebration unless they were waiters. On the same day, national reformers aghast at Springfield's race riots formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Sources: *Outrage: The events and aftermath of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot*, *State Journal-Register*, June 2008; *Something So Horrible: The Springfield Race Riot of 1908*, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, 2008; *In Lincoln's Shadow: The 1908 Race Riot in Springfield, Illinois*, by Roberta Senechal de la Roche.





*Smoldering ruins are hosed down.*

What was unique about Springfield's riots, she says, was the amount of property damage and the location — the city was the home of the Great Emancipator. Rioters even attacked Lincoln's home and cursed him as they rampaged, saying "Lincoln freed you, we'll show you where you belong!" according to *The Race War in the North*, published by *The Independent* magazine on September 3, 1908. National newspapers pummeled Springfield for hypocrisy. (Subsequent northern race riots were worse, with more property damage and deaths.)

Springfield's riots had one positive outcome. Reformers shocked by them and concerned about racial violence in general formed the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on February 12, 1909, the centennial of Lincoln's birth. Meanwhile, Springfield celebrated the centennial by holding a plush, whites-only dinner in the State Arsenal.

Sporadic racial attacks continued in Springfield, and racial divisions worsened. Blacks weren't allowed to live in certain areas, according to the UIS oral history of Mattie Hale, a black woman who was 16 in 1908. Even 17 years later, "the sears and prejudices and hate that was engendered (in the riots) ... still hung like a cloud from an atomic bomb," said Dr. Theodore Rose in his UIS oral history. "There were people whose families had been so injured, and they still felt resentment, so the Negroes went to themselves quite a bit. They patronized their own businesses."

"The riots were covered up," says Mann, the Springfield historian. "I think Springfield wanted to forget the whole thing. They got a black eye from all of the press. ... The last 20 years is when people just started talking about it."

Two white sixth-graders at Iles School in Springfield helped get the city talking

about it. In 1991, Amanda Staab and Lindsay Harney studied the riots for school and asked the city to construct a memorial for the event. Over the next five years, the city erected markers at riot sites and helped produce a symposium and educational video about the riots. During the

same time, a nonprofit group erected markers at victims' graves.

For the riots' centennial in 2008, the city used a state grant to commission Illinois artist Preston Jackson to create a sculpture memorializing the riots; it was placed across the street from the museum that commemorates the city's adopted son, Abraham Lincoln. Special events, including prayer sessions near riot sites, were organized by religious organizations throughout the year.

Perhaps most important, then-Springfield Mayor Tim Davlin apologized for the riots and their "lingering consequences." It took 100 years, but Springfield finally looked itself in the mirror. □  
*Tara McClellan McAndrew is a Springfield-based free-lance writer.*

Photograph courtesy of waymarking.com



*Illinois artist Preston Jackson's sculpture memorializing the riots is located across the street from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library*



# A taxing time

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Even after the passage of the income tax increase,  
lawmakers have plenty left to do

by Jamey Dunn

Although legislators passed a tax increase in the last day of the lame duck session, they allowed other components in an overall budget and reform plan — some of which would have expedited long overdue payments to vendors, schools and social service providers — to fall apart.

As the members of the 97th General Assembly embark on a new two-year legislative session, piecing together some of the leftover parts of that plan will likely be their first order of business.

After floating several versions of a tax plan, legislators passed and Gov. Pat Quinn signed a measure that raised the personal income tax rate from 3 percent to 5 percent and the corporate income tax from 4.8 percent to 7 percent. Under the legislation, both rates will drop after four years, to 3.75 percent for personal income tax and to 5.25 percent for the corporate income tax. The plan is expected to bring in roughly \$6.5 billion in its first year.

Chicago Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie, who sponsored the tax bill, estimates that a family of four with an income of \$40,000 will pay roughly \$800 more a year under the initial increase.

Shortly before legislators approved the increase, David Vaught, Quinn's budget director, warned that without new revenue a downgrade of Illinois' bond rating to "junk" status was imminent. If that were to happen, the state would have to pay high interest rates on borrowing and could have a harder time selling bonds in the future.

As the state brings in more money, legislators have to stick to set spending limits. Spending will be capped at \$36.8 billion in fiscal year 2012, \$37.5 billion in FY 2013, \$38.3 billion in FY 2014 and \$39.1 billion in FY 2015. If lawmakers spend more, the tax increases are nullified. It will be up to the Illinois auditor general to determine if the state has overspent. Democrats describe that provision as the "hammer" that will keep future budgeting in line. Both chambers changed rules to require a three-fifths vote on any legislation that would increase the limits.

The spending caps, coupled with the new revenue from the tax increase, are intended to address the state's structural deficit over the next four years. Democrats argue that the growing cost of the pension systems and health care will force legislators to make cuts to bring the budget in under those limits. "We already know looming pension contributions and Medicaid will press against the new cap on government spending. As the next General Assembly starts business, we must begin to find nearly \$300 million in cuts to comply with the spending cap. And the General Assembly will likely have to do the same the year after, and the year after that, and probably the year after that," Senate President John Cullerton said in a written statement.

Republicans say Democrats started with an inflated base figure when they created the caps. They see the limits as built-in spending growth for the next four years. House Minority Leader Tom Cross calls

for no new spending in the coming years. "They have codified \$6 billion in spending increases. They've codified those."

Cross doubts the notion that the tax increases are temporary. "I think it's clearly false." He says the growth would put spending at a level that to be maintained, would require an extension of the higher tax rates beyond the planned four years. "It's kind of absurd that you've got a 2 percent growth in every year. ... We can't sustain that." No Republicans voted in favor of the tax increase.

A plan to borrow \$8.75 billion, which would have been paid off over 14 years, to pay down the more than \$6 billion backlog of unpaid bills for this fiscal year failed to get the 71 votes it needed to pass. Spring Valley Democratic Rep. Frank Mautino, who sponsored the borrowing bill, says if the measure had passed in January, the state could have started sending out checks in March.

Democrats describe the plan as a "restructuring of debt" that would save money in the long run because the state would pay less interest on the borrowing than it does on late payments to vendors. "Most people who own homes, in the last five years, have refinanced. And why? Because they could do it at a lower interest rate, and they're all saving money. Why shouldn't the state do the same? In fact, we have a responsibility to do the same," says Skokie Democratic Rep. Lou Lang. "All we're doing is exchanging borrowing for debt. We still owe the money."



*Senate President John Cullerton*

Republican leaders say they are willing in the new session to consider a borrowing plan, which would need Republican votes in both chambers to pass, to pay off some of the bills. But they want some things in return for their support.

“We want our bills paid. We know that vendors need to be paid,” says Cross. “One of the things that we’re going to talk about is maybe the size of that borrowing [and] the length. We’re going to talk about some cuts, and we’re going to talk about some other fundamental things that we need to talk about.”

Potential reforms to the state’s workers’ compensation system will likely play into the negotiations over the borrowing plan. All four legislative leaders count bringing down the cost of workers’ compensation among their top priorities for the new session.

Lawmakers pushed a reform package in the waning days of the last session, but it was not called for a floor vote in either chamber. Representatives of organized labor and the health care industry lined up to oppose the bill, which would have lowered the amounts employers must pay doctors to treat injured workers.

The legislation also would have let employers choose the doctor who assesses and treats an employee making an

injury claim. If not satisfied with the doctor, the employee could visit another doctor and obtain referrals to other specialists from that doctor, and the employer would cover the cost. However, if the employee wanted a second opinion beyond that doctor or the referrals, the employer would not have to pay for it.

Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno calls the effort to reform workers’ compensation “one of the most serious attempts to deal with the issue that we’ve seen in a long time.” She adds, “We just didn’t quite get there with the few weeks we had to work on it.”

Radogno says the intricacies of such a large system make it difficult to change. However, she emphasizes the importance of bringing down costs because she says employers list the expense of workers’ compensation in Illinois as one of the top reasons for wanting to take their business elsewhere.

“It is a very complicated system, and there are a number of interest groups that are impacted by it,” Radogno says. “It has become a very large system, delicately balanced, and anytime you try to change one piece of it, it throws the whole thing out of balance. So what we need to get to is a point where the reforms are balanced across all the inter-

est groups, and we still make sure that the injured worker gets good care, fast care, cost effectively.”

While any pain the reforms may cause should be as evenly distributed as possible to all stakeholders, Radogno thinks the days of changing the system through the so-called agreed bills process, which creates a plan that is negotiated and agreed upon by the major interest groups, are over.

“To remove it from the interest groups and have the legislators actually listen to the interest groups and make the final decision is a huge step forward.”

While considering workers’ compensation changes, legislators also looked to reform Medicaid and education. The General Assembly approved in January a bipartisan plan to rework the Medicaid program, which provides health care to low-income residents.

However, the Senate put the brakes on education reforms after teachers’ unions asked for time to work out a plan. “Give the people who will have to implement these reforms time to figure them out. Not months. Not years. But not days either. That’s not right. But it does make everyone watching this today wonder what the motivation is — real change that improves education for kids, or



something else,” Audrey Soglin, executive director of the Illinois Education Association, said at a committee hearing on proposed reforms.

As part of Illinois’ failed bid for Race to the Top, a competitive federal education grant program, the General Assembly set new standards for teacher evaluations, which call for student performance to play a large role in the way educators are rated.

Some reform groups want to see the results of those evaluations become the primary factor in administrative decisions, such as firings and layoffs. Currently, teacher seniority plays a large role in such choices. Another proposal would have limited teacher unions’ ability to strike.

Unions have worked up their own plan, which overlaps some proposals from reform organizations. It also calls for expanded teacher mentoring programs, training for school board members and a “student bill of rights.” Maywood Democratic Sen. Kimberly Lightford, who was a key negotiator in new education laws passed as part of the state’s Race to the Top grant proposal, says she hopes to merge ideas from both groups.

Radogno thinks the new General Assembly could potentially pass education reforms in its first year.

Republicans and Democrats are also both eyeing more changes to state pension systems. The General Assembly passed reforms to the current system, which went into effect at the beginning of this year.

Cross says those changes do not go far enough. He believes Illinois needs to adapt the benefits for employees that were hired before the changes were put into place. He says the Constitution protects the benefits that retirees and current employees have earned, but the state must make changes to the future benefits that current employees can earn.

Cross says he intends to introduce a bill that would include recommendations from the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago. Under the proposal, the state would either contribute less to workers’ current plans, or employees could choose a “defined contributions plan,” which is similar to a 401(k). The state would then match whatever each employee opts to invest in his or her retirement.



*House Speaker Michael Madigan*

He acknowledges that some may perceive his proposals as anti-worker or anti-union, but he says: “It is not at all meant as an attack on current employees.”

He adds, “This is a discussion about saving a pension system.” Cross says it will be a difficult discussion but one that would be “criminal” for legislators not to have.

Cullerton disagrees that the legislature can change future benefits for current employees. He says the state can only make changes to the system for future employees. “I am definitely looking at savings in pensions, but you can’t do it in an unconstitutional way.”

Cullerton does agree with Cross on one point: Making sure that Illinois can meet its pension obligations is a top priority.

“I don’t view stabilizing the pension system for existing employees and retirees as being anti-union,” Cullerton says of the reforms that were passed last year.

Cullerton says he is interested in changing the way the teachers’ retirement system is funded. He would like to shift some of the costs away from the state by requiring local government to contribute to teachers’ retirements, similar to what they currently do for firefighters and law enforcement.

House Speaker Michael Madigan says one of the most important things lawmakers can do in the new session is to avoid unraveling the work that the General Assembly has already done.

“We have to learn to live within our means. We cannot backtrack on those changes that we made in the Medicaid system. We cannot backtrack on those changes we made in the pension systems,” Madigan said in a speech to newly elected House members after they were sworn in. “And that’s going to require courage, and that’s going to require people to say no.” □





# After Obama

Have race relations evolved since the election of the first black president?

by Robert Joiner

Two years after winning a presidential election and bringing an afterglow of hope to many Americans, President Barack Obama finds his public support falling below the 50 percent mark on all major issues except one: race relations.

The finding, in a *USA Today*/Gallup poll released in August, demonstrates the complexity and the paradox of race in America. While the president has support for the way he's handling or sidestepping this sensitive issue, the Gallup finding underscores to some a more troubling revelation: Obama's election has yet to usher in the sea change that some had expected.

In fact, there appears to have been little transformation at all, with public perception of progress being no higher on Obama's watch than during the terms of presi-

dents for nearly half a century. In December 1963, when Gallup first asked respondents if they were hopeful that America would find an answer to its racial problems, 55 percent thought so. That response is nearly identical to the 56 percent who felt that way 46 years later, during Obama's first year in office, Gallup notes.

The lack of change so far is significant because many voters, especially Democrats, have regarded Obama as a consensus-builder who would shore up black and white perceptions of one another. Some of his supporters went so far as to regard his victory as pointing the way to a post-racial society, one that is colorblind in outlook and barrier-free to minority achievement.

That premise is deeply flawed, argues Kira Hudson Banks, an associate professor

of psychology at Illinois Wesleyan University.

"I don't want to take away from the milestone value of the election. It did a lot. It broke down barriers. I think that people had hoped that there would be a sea change in race relations."

However significant and important Obama's rise to the top of the political mountain, his election didn't "necessarily change the institutional dynamics in our education system, our health care system, our financial system," Banks argues. "All these have disparities based on race."

Even so, she and another Wesleyan scholar, sociologist Meghan Burke, argue that many people of goodwill across political lines really had expected the election to portend a major shift for the better in race



relations. Burke mentions “speaking to many people on the right” who warmed to Obama during and after the election.

“It surprised me after the election that we really could come together,” she says. Two years later, however, she believes, “We’re right back apart.”

Some scholars say there are many developments that bear out Burke’s perception of America being deeply divided and headed down the wrong path after what looked like a promising beginning under Obama.

Perhaps the most controversial development underscoring the racial division was what became known as the Sherrod scandal. It involved a video — distributed with sinister motives — of Shirley Sherrod, a black U.S. Department of Agriculture official. The tape was edited to imply that Sherrod admitted during a speech to discriminating against a white farmer. In fact, the theme of her talk had been about justice, fairness and redemption. Even so, under the administration’s ready, fire, aim mind-set, she was fired but then offered another job after the Agriculture Department and the White House discovered that the tape had been doctored.

“Symbolically, Obama’s election has represented a sea change,” says Eddie Glaude, a professor of religion and African-American studies at Princeton University. “In terms of policy, however, it’s much more uneven.”

He points to the Sherrod case as an example. He says the Agriculture Department and the White House bent over backward and “acted before the facts were in” to duck criticism of reverse discrimination against the farmer. Glaude says individuals such as the blogger who released the doctored tape are another factor that thwarts Obama’s influence on race. Glaude said the blogger’s action amounted to “raceless racism in the public domain that allows behavior by black folks to be easily caricatured as reverse racism.”

Worse and ironically, he says, Obama finds himself in a political climate where he can’t jump-start the dialogue and make the case for better race relations “because many people think we’re post-racial or they will claim victimization or reverse racism. It shows that we really need a language to talk about this issue.”

Still another element affecting whether Obama’s election can or will represent a high-water mark on race is the traditional press, generally regarded as more responsible than bloggers. As the Gallup poll noted, the positive emotional reaction to Obama immediately after the election was influenced in no small way by the upbeat press coverage. By the same token, the press can do harm by the way it depicts Obama, argues Denise DeCou, head of the National Conference for Community and Justice of Metropolitan St. Louis.

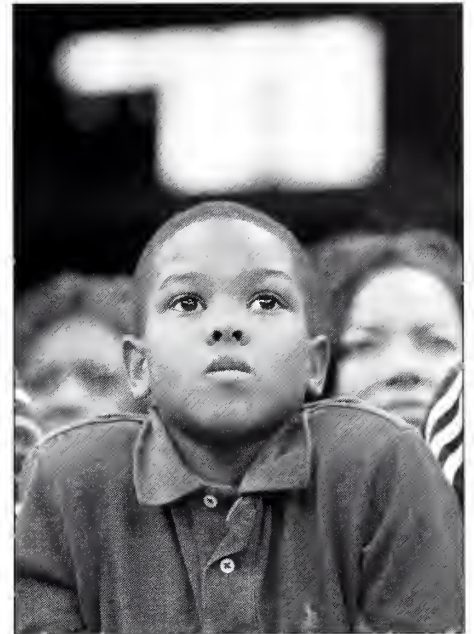
“Some newspapers have published editorial cartoons showing a watermelon patch covering the White House lawn or a caricature of President Obama with a bone through his nose,” she says. “These things illuminate the idea that race is still a huge issue in this country.”

On the other hand, Peniel Joseph, a history scholar at Tufts University, believes many Americans now think that race no longer is an issue or a key factor in whether some people succeed or fail. He argues that this belief is contradicted by a number of conditions, ranging from blacks affected by sentencing disparities to unemployment to poverty, that he thinks continue to be influenced by race.

Still, he says, there have been dividends to Obama’s election, but they are hard to measure. He also thinks the public has “sobered up” to the thinking that Obama’s election represented a transformation but not the kind that will necessarily alter “racial inequality and economic inequality.” Those issues can adversely affect race relations, he says.

David Bositis, senior research associate at the Washington, D.C.-based Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, says the question of whether a sea change has or can occur is irrelevant. What’s more important, he argues, is that little seems to have changed in large parts of the South, where most black Americans live and where “states didn’t embrace Obama.” Moreover, Bositis says, the outcome of midterm elections in the South produced the same “highly racial polarized politics, much like it was in the old days.”

Perhaps some voters have been expecting more than a president in Obama’s shoes can deliver, says Mary Frances Berry, a University of Pennsylvania professor, former chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and author of a well-



*A child listens as President Barack Obama speaks in October in Cleveland, Ohio.*

received book about Obama, titled *Power in Words: The Stories Behind Barack Obama’s Speeches from the State House to the White House*.

“One of the Faustian bargains to get him as president was that he wouldn’t pay particular attention to African-American concerns,” she says. “Otherwise, he won’t get re-elected. There’s the general view that the African-American reward is, in a sense, him.”

She says the Obama years “symbolize that America has reached a watershed, that a majority of people are willing to accept a president who isn’t white.”

The real significance, she says, is that an African-American was elected.

“That’s the sea change.”

Still another angle about whether Obama is capable of winning the hearts of Americans on race relations comes from Darrell West, vice president and director of government studies at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. He says some people are upset not over race but over the economy. “When the economy is bad, the public mood turns ugly, and people look for scapegoats.”

But aside from opposing the president on economic and ideological grounds, some dislike him for racial reasons, West concedes.

“We clearly are not over the issue of race in American politics.” □

*Robert Joiner is a staff writer for the St. Louis Beacon, an Internet newspaper.*



# Prison education



The percentage of inmates who are involved in educational programming at Corrections facilities has been dropping in recent years

by Kurt Erickson

Lori Williams spent 18 months in a state prison on a drug conviction. But the 49-year-old Macon County resident says her time behind bars in the late 1990s didn't go to waste.

While serving her sentence at the Decatur Correctional Center, Williams set her sights on emerging from this dark period by taking advantage of the educational programs offered at the all-female facility.

She took college classes, tutored other inmates in reading and math and went on to earn two associate's degrees. She also received a bachelor's degree and a master's degree and is now working on a doctorate.

"It would have been so much easier for me to just give up," Williams says.

Williams is among thousands of Illinois prison inmates who annually take advantage of education programs while they are serving their sentences. Most take basic education classes in an attempt to earn high school diplomas. Some take courses

aimed at preparing them for jobs once they are released.

But the percentage of inmates who are involved in educational programming at Illinois Department of Corrections facilities has been dropping in recent years, according to statistics provided by the agency.

Figures show that nearly 71 percent of the inmate population took some sort of class in the 2006 fiscal year. That number has dropped to just below 60 percent in the past three years.

And although the department says it plans to spend about \$4 million more this year on educational programming than the \$22 million it spent last year, a recent spike in the inmate population could keep those percentages low again.

At any one time, upward of 7,500 inmates spread across the state's sprawling prison system take some sort of educational or vocational class aimed at reducing the chances that they'll return once their sentences run out.

In a 1997 study, Illinois Department of Corrections researchers found that inmates who leave prison with basic degrees and job training are far less likely to return. A separate study by the Correctional Education Association found education behind bars led to a 29 percent decrease in recidivism.

"Studies show that inmates who find work once they are released from prison are less likely to recidivate," noted Illinois Department of Corrections spokeswoman Sharyn Elman.

With Corrections estimating the average cost of incarceration at an Illinois prison at \$25,000 — and the John Howard Association, a prison watchdog group, saying it could range as high as \$64,000 — limiting a return trip to the slammer is one way to relieve pressure on the state's muddled finances.

Williams, who has made prison education a major part of her post-graduate studies, says, "You reduce recidivism, and you can ease the pressure on the state budget."

Illinois offers a mix of classes for inmates. Basic high school diploma programs are often taught by in-house Department of Corrections employees. There also are vocational training programs that Illinois community colleges provide on a contractual basis.

In those programs, inmates can learn work skills, such as auto body repair, construction, food service and barbering.

Inmates also can take college-level academic courses.

In recent years, however, the state's ability to continue running prison education programs through the community colleges has come under question.

In a May 2010 study, the John Howard Association issued a report criticizing what it says were reductions in prison education programs.

The report noted that in 2002, nearly 6,000 inmates, or 14 percent of the prison population, were enrolled in college programs. By 2009, that number had fallen to 4,730.

In 2002, there were 136 vocational programs available in Illinois prisons, according to the report. In 2009 there were only 96.

A separate report prepared for the General Assembly by the Department of Corrections shows enrollment in educational programs dropped by 1,000 inmates between January 2010 and August 2010.

A key reason for the reductions is the state's failure to pay vendors — the colleges — in a timely manner.

Beginning last summer, as the state's financial woes continued their downward spiral, community colleges began dropping out of the program, complaining they could no longer wait for the state to pay its bills.

At Illinois Eastern Community Colleges based in Olney, Chief Executive Officer Terry Bruce says the prison education programs are one of his proudest achievements.

"It was one of the good things that we did. It's Christian type of work," he says.

Bruce, a former congressman, says he spoke at every graduation and watched as inmates left prison for jobs that would keep them from coming back. He says the work done by his educators helped reduce recidivism.

"It's a huge savings for the taxpayer to not have these people returning to prison," Bruce says.

But, he says, the state's massive backlog of bills forced him to give up the contract last summer. Through November, the Department of Corrections still owed the college \$415,000 for work the college completed before June 30.

"We could not afford to run that program and not get paid for it," Bruce says. "I'm sorry as hell that we're not doing it."

Illinois Eastern's programs, like others that folded, were taken on by Lake Land College, based in Mattoon.

Although state officials have tried to keep the programs intact, the director of Lake Land's prison education program says he has no doubt that cutbacks have occurred.

"There are far less classes," says Tom Kerkhoff. "It's appreciably less than it was eight years ago."

Deciphering exactly how much has been cut remains tricky. An analysis provided by the Illinois Community College Board shows the number of hours taught by community college instructors has

## Illinois prison education program enrollment declines

### Adult basic education



### GED

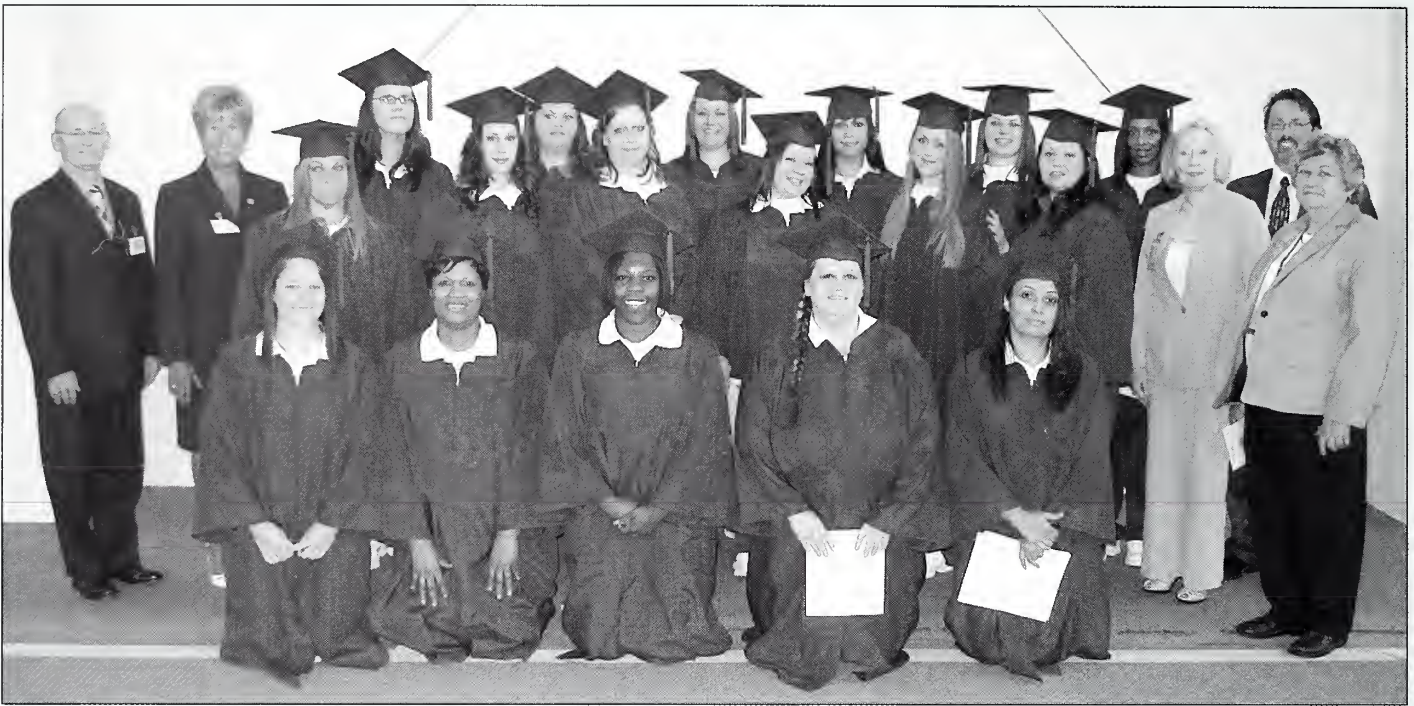


### Vocational



SOURCE: Illinois Department of Corrections





*Female inmates at the Decatur Correctional Center in August receive certificates from Richland Community College.*

dropped by about 6.7 percent since the 2007 fiscal year.

One major problem has been a lack of new hiring by the Department of Corrections.

"If we have an employee resign, we don't get to post for a replacement," Kerkhoff says.

A recent check of open jobs at the Department of Corrections showed just one education position posted. Agency officials were looking for a canine instructor to help with an inmate service dog training program at the all-female prison in Dwight.

Richland Community College serves inmates at four prisons — Decatur, Logan, Lincoln and Pontiac. The institution primarily provides vocational certificate programs in areas such as food service, construction and commercial custodial services.

In 2010, Richland's programs served 654 offenders.

"This is a smaller number than previous years due to a decline in the number of programs funded by IDOC," notes Richland spokeswoman Lisa Gregory. "Although programs remain at capacity enrollment, the numbers of offenders served will continue to decline as long as the number of programs offered continues to decline."

Like other schools, Richland is running the programs on the hope it eventually gets paid by the state.

The college's four contracts with the prisons total \$1.6 million this year. Through mid-December, it had been paid just \$16,717. It took the state until December 10 to pay the \$118,930 it owed Richland from the fiscal year that ended June 30.

It's not just community college classes that may be suffering.

A 2007 report by the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union alleged that Corrections' officials were fudging some of the agency's education statistics by reducing class times so they could fit more students into an instructor's day. The net effect was no drop-off in the number of students but a significant drop-off in the amount of time those students were in class.

"Cutting the length of classes to increase the number of classes allows IDOC to meet the letter of the law without actually investing more resources in corrections education," the report notes.

AFSCME says the decline began before the state's fiscal problems went into a tailspin.

During former Gov. Rod Blagojevich's tenure, the union claims that front-line

educational staff was reduced by 36 percent.

"Anyway you want to look at it, programming at Illinois prisons has been reduced. You're left with glorified warehousing," says AFSCME spokesman Anders Lindall. "That's counter to what we know about reducing recidivism."

Lawmakers have tried to address the importance of education in prisons.

Corrections spokeswoman Elman acknowledged some classes have been shortened because of the state's budget constraints. But, she says, the inmates are not being "shortchanged."

"They are graduating with degrees, and their education is helping them as they integrate back into society once they are released from prison," Elman says.

In sweeping anti-crime legislation approved in 2009, **Senate Bill 1289** called for a plan to limit class sizes so that the student-teacher ratio is not larger than 30 to 1. That goal, however, doesn't address how many classes Corrections may or may not offer.

John Maki, coordinating director of the John Howard Association, says it will take creative thinking to help turn around prison education in Illinois.

The Department of Corrections, for example, could increase its use of online learning for inmates. It could tailor spe-



cial programs to specific prisons. And officials could turn to volunteers to help educate prisoners.

Not only could those ideas help inmates, but it could assist prison workers in running safer facilities. "When inmates are in classes, they are generally not causing problems," Maki says.

Despite a plan to spend more money on prison education this year, it remains unclear whether demand will continue to outstrip supply. Department projections show the already overcrowded prison system could have nearly 49,200 inmates by the end of this fiscal year in June, up nearly 4,000 inmates from the prior year.

"All of our college programs have waiting lists," Richland's Gregory notes.

Williams, the former prisoner, says prison education programs are too valuable to let go by the wayside.

"These types of programs do have an effect. We have to have opportunities when we get out." □

*Kurt Erickson is state Capitol bureau chief for Lee Enterprises.*

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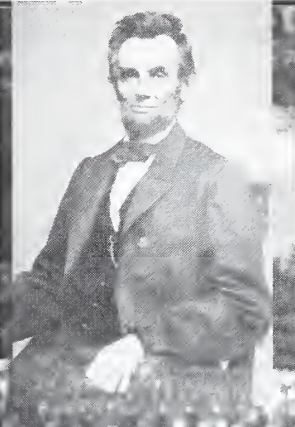
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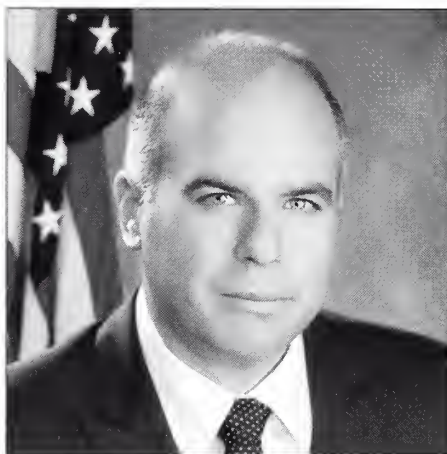
## New lawmakers

Democrats have smaller majorities in the Illinois House and Senate after the January 12 inauguration. The Senate gave up its Democratic supermajority with a net loss of two seats, and the House moved further from that status with its loss of six seats. The party breakdown is now 64-54 in the House and 35-24 in the Senate.

Incumbent **Michael Bond** of Grayslake lost his Senate race to Lake County Board chairwoman **Suzi Schmidt** of Lake Villa, allowing Republicans to retake the seat **Adeline Geo-Karis** held for more than 25 years. And Republican businessman **Sam McCann** of Carlinville beat incumbent **Deanna Demuzio** of Carlinville, who had served after the death of her husband, longtime lawmaker **Vince Demuzio**.

Meanwhile, two targeted Republican lawmakers from Elgin lost their bids for a return to their former seats: former Sen. **Steven Rauschenberger** of Elgin lost to Democratic incumbent **Michael Noland** of Elgin, and former Rep. **Ruth Munson** lost to incumbent **Keith Farnham** of Elgin.

In the House, Democrats won back a single Republican seat, that of **Elizabeth Coulson** of Glenview, who did not run. Democrat **Daniel Biss** of Evanston, a policy adviser to Gov. Pat Quinn and a former math instructor at the University of



*Sam McCann of Carlinville and Suzi Schmidt of Lake Villa are the two Republicans who beat Democratic incumbent senators, costing Democrats a supermajority in the Senate.*

Chicago, won that seat.

Among the defeated Democrats was 10-term incumbent **Jay Hoffman** of Collinsville, who lost to Glen Carbon's **Dwight Kay**, the vice president of a transport company.

New to the House are Democrats **Kelly Burke**, a legislative aide to former state Rep. Andrew McGann and president of the Evergreen Park Public Library Board; **Bill Cunningham** of Chicago, the former chief of staff for the Cook County sheriff who was to be press secretary to Gov. Pat Quinn but left to run for office; **Thaddeus Jones**, a Calumet City alderman; **Michelle Mussman**, a local PTA president from Schaumburg; **Arthur Turner** of Chicago, the son of former Rep. Art Turner, who stepped down to run



for lieutenant governor; and **Ann Williams**, a municipal lawyer from Chicago who is a former assistant attorney general.

Republicans new to the House are **Adam Brown**, a Decatur City Council member; former Rep. **David Harris** of Arlington Heights; **Chad Hays**, former mayor of Catlin; businessman **Tom Morrison** of Palatine; **Rich Morthland** of Cordova, a Rock Island County Board member; Elmhurst City Council member **Chris Nybo**; businesswoman **Sue Rezin** of Morris; Lincoln Land Community College Board of Trustees member **Wayne Rosenthal** of Morrisonville; Rockford City Council member **Joe Sosnowski**; and East Peoria City Commissioner **Michael Unes**.

## Mayor dies

Springfield Mayor **Tim Davlin** died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, the Sangamon County coroner's office ruled.

Police received a 911 call from Davlin's home shortly before 9 a.m. on December 14. According to Springfield Police Chief Rob Williams, Davlin was "unresponsive" when officers arrived and did not respond to resuscitation attempts. He had failed to show up that morning at a court-ordered appearance for a financial accounting of a relative's estate for which he was executor.

The investigation of the death was turned over to the Illinois State Police.

Davlin had been mayor of Springfield since April 2003. He announced in November that he did not intend to run for a third term in March. The *Springfield State-Journal Register* reported in October that the Internal Revenue Service had placed a lien on his home of nearly \$90,000 that the agency said Davlin owed in unpaid taxes.

"Tim was a great public servant who loved Springfield and its people," Gov. Pat Quinn said in a written statement. "The city of Springfield is a better place because of his leadership. As mayor, Tim led the community through some of its most difficult times and worked hard to revitalize the city. He was not only a champion for Springfield, but also for the entire state, and he will be greatly missed by all who knew him."

The Springfield City Council elected Ald. **Frank Edwards** to replace Davlin.



*Springfield Mayor Tim Davlin committed suicide in December*

For updated news see the *Illinois Issues* website at <http://illinoisissues.uis.edu>

## Obama taps Daley

William 'Bill' Daley is President Barack Obama's new chief of staff.

Daley, the former Commerce secretary under President Bill Clinton and brother of Chicago Mayor Richard Daley, replaces **Pete Rouse**, who has been serving as interim chief of staff since **Rahm Emanuel** departed to launch his own mayoral campaign.

As chief of staff, Daley, a key adviser to Obama, leads efforts to carry out the president's agenda.

In his White House announcement, Obama said: "Few Americans can boast the breadth of experience that Bill brings to this job. He served as a member of President Clinton's Cabinet as commerce secretary. He took on several other important duties over the years on behalf of our country. He's led major corporations. He possesses a deep understanding of how jobs are created and how to grow our economy. And needless to say, Bill also has a smidgen of awareness of how our system of government and politics works. You might say it is a genetic trait."



*White House Chief of Staff  
William 'Bill' Daley*

"But most of all, I know Bill to be somebody who cares deeply about this country, believes in its promise and considers no calling higher and more important than serving the American people. He will bring his tremendous experience, his strong values and forward-looking vision to this White House. I'm convinced that he'll help us in our mission of growing our economy and moving America forward. And I very much look forward to working with Bill in the years to come."

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin said of the hiring in a prepared statement: "President Obama has made a fine choice in naming Bill Daley as his chief of staff. I have known Bill Daley for over 35 years and have worked with him in many different capacities here in Washington and back home in Illinois."

"Bill has been a successful businessman, public servant and community leader. The president will be well-served with Bill Daley as his chief of staff."

Daley was an executive at JP Morgan Chase.

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Meanwhile, first lady **Michelle Obama** announced the promotion of Chicagoan **Tina Tchen** to assistant to the president and chief of staff to the first lady.

Tchen had been deputy assistant to the president and director of the office of public engagement. She will continue in her role as the executive director of the White House Council on Women and Girls.

## Shifts at the top



*Jack Lavin*

**Jack Lavin** is Gov. **Pat Quinn**'s chief of staff.

The previous chief of staff, **Michelle Sadler**, resumed her position as secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services.

"Jack Lavin has helped my administration accomplish many of our top priorities, and I have full confidence that he has the vision and ability to lead my office into a successful new term and will tackle the many serious issues facing our state," Quinn said in a prepared statement.

Lavin has been Quinn's chief operating officer since February 2009 and was deputy treasurer under Quinn when he was treasurer. Before becoming a part of Quinn's administration, he was director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity under former Gov. **Rod Blagojevich**.

Quinn's original chief of staff, **Jerry Stermer**, resigned after some minor ethics violations during Quinn's campaign for governor. Stermer has since returned to the administration as a senior adviser.

**Mica Matsoff**, who led Gov. Pat Quinn's communications efforts for his campaign, has been hired as the administration's director of communications. She replaces **Ashley Cross**, who had been director of communications since July. Cross is leaving to become chief of staff at the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice.

"Mica Matsoff has become one of my most valued advisers, and I am confident that her experience in strategic communications will help us take our office to the next level," Quinn said in a prepared statement. "I would also like to thank Ashley Cross for her tireless work and dedication. I respect her desire to embark down a new path, and I look forward to her continued service with some of the state's most vulnerable young people."

Matsoff will be a key adviser to Quinn, planning and overseeing the administration's internal and external communications.

She received a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has worked in both the public and private sectors in strategic communications, crisis management and public relations.

She served as the director of public relations for Chicago 2016, that city's bid for the Olympics. She also worked as a spokeswoman for the departments of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Employment Security.

Cross, who served as the director of communications for DCEO before moving to Quinn's office, received her bachelor's degree from Butler University and a master's degree in nonprofit administration from North Park University.

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**Gevan "Gus" Behnke** is the acting executive director of the Capital Development Board, replacing Executive Director **Jim Riemer**, who retired December 31.

Behnke, who joined the board in 1979, has been the agency's chief fiscal officer for the past 22 years. Behnke has a bachelor's degree in physics and math from Valparaiso University. He also holds a master's degree in nuclear physics from Purdue University, as well as a master's degree in business administration from Illinois State University.

The Capital Development Board is the construction management arm of Illinois state government.





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Your comments are welcome.  
Please keep them brief (250 words).  
We reserve the right to excerpt them.

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Charles N. Wheeler III



## Mapmaking sure to present challenges for lawmakers

by Charles N. Wheeler III

In a few weeks, the U.S. Census Bureau is scheduled to deliver to Illinois and our sister states detailed demographic breakdowns on the populace's age, gender, race and other characteristics, virtually on a block-by-block basis.

The fruits of last year's federal census, the vast amount of information will become the raw material for the decade's most intensely political endeavor, drawing new district maps for the Illinois General Assembly and the state's congressional delegation.

And for the first time in the modern era of "one person, one vote" mapmaking, the entire process here will be controlled from start to finish by one party, the reward reaped by Illinois Democrats in November by maintaining their legislative majorities and by electing Gov. Pat Quinn in his own right.

One would assume the Democratic monopoly will mean the maps will be drawn by May 31, the constitutional deadline before the cartographic task heads to a bipartisan commission, potentially handing the pen to Republicans in a winner-take-all random drawing to break a stalemate.

But the census data is likely to pose some challenges for the Democrats, just as the numbers did a decade ago when the party won the right to craft the current map, under which Democrats have held Senate and House majorities for five straight elections.

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The official 2010 count, released in late December by the census bureau, showed an increase of about 411,000 residents in Illinois, to slightly more than 12.8 million, from 12.4 million in 2000. But the detailed breakdown, due by April 1, won't show a uniform 3.3 percent increase across the state's 102 counties, according to population estimates the census bureau released last year. Instead, close to 90 percent of the growth is likely to be concentrated in the five collar counties, particularly Kane and Will, the estimates suggest. In fact, Chicago and suburban Cook County may have lost people since 2000.

Outside the Chicago area, population gains are likely to be spotty, based on the earlier estimates. Counties close to Chicago, such as Kendall — tabbed by the census bureau as one of the nation's fastest-growing areas — Boone, DeKalb and Grundy are expected to post double-digit gains. Major urban areas farther out — Champaign-Urbana, Bloomington-Normal, Springfield, Peoria and the Metro East — also are expected to show growth.

Elsewhere south of I-80, the news is not likely to be good. The census projections show declining populations in roughly four out of every five of the other 71 counties in central and southern Illinois.

The uneven growth means a lot of current lawmakers — mostly downstate, but also some in Chicago and suburban Cook — now are representing districts that have too few residents to meet the new population standards of approximately 108,732 for the Illinois House and 217,464 for the state Senate. Conversely, most legislators from collar county districts are likely to have excess population.

Such a disparity would mirror 2000, when only 20 of the 59 existing Senate districts and 37 of the 118 existing House districts were populous enough to meet the required numbers. Illustrating the problem then, the largest House district had almost 190,000 inhabitants; the smallest, fewer than 80,000. Roughly



four out of every five Democratic incumbents were short population, while incumbent Republicans broke about even.

Faced with those numbers, party mapmakers followed several proven strategies to craft Democratic-leaning districts. The techniques included:

- Extending Chicago-anchored districts into suburbia to meet population targets without jeopardizing party control. The task was simplified by substantial growth in the minority population in suburbs to the west and to the south of the city.

- Building some downstate districts around large urban areas, like Champaign-Urbana, rather than splitting cities between districts dominated by rural, thus likely Republican, voters, a technique GOP cartographers used in drawing the 1991 map.

- Fashioning more districts in which the majority of residents were Hispanic, to a total of four in the Senate and eight in the House, double the 1991 count.

Expect Democrats to follow the same playbook this spring, with an especially strong emphasis on crafting districts in

which minority voters — chiefly Hispanic, but also African-American and Asian — can play a greater role.

Underscoring the effort to strengthen minority voting power, the outgoing legislature approved a measure requiring mapmakers to draw districts in which racial or language minorities would have a better chance to elect a candidate of their choice or to influence the outcome of the voting.

Hispanics in particular are a key ethnic component for mapmakers. While not a racial category in the census, respondents who identified themselves as Hispanic are expected to make up more than 60 percent of the state's population growth, according to some estimates. Census projections had the state's non-Hispanic black population basically holding steady, Asians increasing by about 30 percent, and non-Hispanic whites declining.

Moreover, Illinois Hispanics are fast becoming a reliable Democratic voting bloc, thanks in part to a national Republican agenda that many see as hostile to their interests. The latest evidence of the

perceived GOP antipathy came in December, when minority Republicans in the U.S. Senate led the effort to kill the so-called DREAM Act, a proposal that would have provided a road to citizenship for undocumented young people brought to the United States as children, if they had high school or GED degrees and completed two years in the military or in college.

"This is a critical political moment, and the Latino community and the entire nation will surely hold accountable the political leaders who cravenly blocked progress today," declared Thomas Saenz, president of the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), a leading legal civil rights organization, in the wake of the Senate vote.

As they prepare to draw new legislative and congressional districts, Illinois Democrats surely are hoping his words are prophetic. □

*Charles N. Wheeler III is director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois Springfield.*

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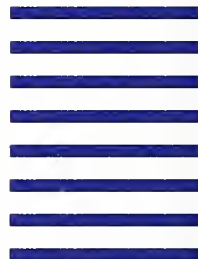
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